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by P. G. Wodehouse

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STORIES THAT HAVE MADE ME LAUGH

by Montague Glass

Illustrations by Rea Irvin

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November
Cosmopolitan

WILLIAM RAYMOND HENRY, President C. H. HATHAWAY, Vice-President RAY LONG, Vice-President JOSEPH A. MOORE, Treasurer W. G. LAWSON, Secretary, 119 W. 40th St., New York
\$3.00 a Year in U. S. and Possessions; \$3.50 in Canada; \$4.00 Elsewhere 35 Cents a Copy

Published monthly at 119 West 40th Street, New York, N. Y., U. S. A., by International Magazine Company. Entered as second-class matter, September 8, 1905, at the Post-Office, New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Entered on July 1, 1918, at the Post-Office, Atlanta, Ga.; Boston, Mass.; Chicago, Ill.; Los Angeles, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.

All subscriptions are payable in advance. We cannot begin subscriptions with back numbers. Unless otherwise directed we begin all subscriptions with the current issue. When sending in your renewal or making a request for a change of address, please give us four weeks' notice. If you wish your address changed, please be sure to give us both your old and new addresses.

Cosmopolitan, 119 West 40th Street, New York

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Wonderful Clay Brings New Beauty to Every Skin!

Almost at once the complexion becomes clear and beautiful through this amazing scientific discovery.

SCIENCE is giving new complexions for old through a marvelous new discovery! Dull, coarse, blemished skins are being transformed into exquisite softness and smoothness—almost at once. Years of scientific research and experiment have finally revealed the elements which, when combined in certain exact proportions, remove the dead scales on the surface of the skin, clear the pores of every impurity, and leave the complexion as clear and charming as a child's.

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The Best for the Boy

NEVER was the problem of the boy so pressing as today. The world may continue to experiment in industry, trade, government. To experiment with the boy is to imperil that racial leadership called by Bishop Brent "a sense of purpose."

Having failed in so many fields of human interest that William Allen White concludes "no form of democracy seems able to cope with the situation," some seem inclined to make toward a stalemate, and to leave for our boys when they grow up perplexing problems we have failed to solve. Often there is cowardice where there is not stupidity in handling the holy phrase: "A little child shall lead them."

While the right-minded everywhere will do their utmost to improve the schools which serve the millions, to train distinctively for leadership, parents, when they can must choose the best school, whatever it may be, if only to insure "a saving remnant," out of which to cull leaders for the future for the healing of the nations. To take liberty with Arthur Stringer's striking sentence, there is now no time to wait for the cream of decision to rise on the pan of vacillation. Everywhere men are steadily moving toward this discovery which the *Cosmopolitan* has made, and in establishing the Roches school for leadership at Verneuil-sur-Avre the French have set the pace.

Our own private schools are rapidly improving. They are better than they were before the war. With a new sense of responsibility many are now training for leadership. Some have consciously enlarged the goal set in 1777 by the founder of Phillips Academy: "the great and real business of living." Increasing thought is given to the training of the soul as well as mind and body. Schools could be named whose wholesome influence is now felt in colleges, and other schools are definitely aiming to inject into life at large a worthier spirit of democracy.

Schools can be chosen for boys most promising without concern lest every frantic cry for novelty may have a hearing. We parents have been shamed by the more intelligent

oversight and more minute attention given in good schools to the daily life of boys. Doctor Slattery says the church schools "have proved so potent in training robust and honorable manhood, that they will certainly be multiplied in the next few years." In many schools the religious training is already sensible, helpful and lasting. The political serpent taints none of them with its slimy trail.

In various essentials our schools average higher than the schools abroad. They profit by the longer experience of the European schools. The chimney pot hat of Eton and the unbuttoned jacket of Winchester are distinctive: but there is no need to import them to our schools. What we learn from abroad are certain conventions universally worth while, tutorial methods which bear effectively on individual cases, and the unit habit of grouping boys in houses under the care of gentlefolk who socialize their life but never their curriculum, and as in the French lycee give, in more than one language, accurate information while they start the young mind on that highway of generalization which runs the entire length of French culture.

The hour has struck for parents to see straight, and act effectively. Civilization to continue must have a larger percentage of trained leaders who will set true democracy in paths of peace and righteousness. This is indeed a solemn time for the father and mother with a boy of promise.

This word goes to millions as our schools enter on another year. Nowhere is there wider range of choice of schools than in our pages. You owe your boy the best. He has a right to all the preparation you can give him for those hardships which lie in his way, as civilization, never automatic, goes plunging on amid accumulating perils. Take this message up into your heart:

"O little feet that such long years,
Must wander on through hopes and fears,
Must ache and bleed beneath your load;
I nearer to the wayside inn,
Where toils shall cease and rest begin,
Am weary thinking of your road."

Sydney P. Powell

Director, *Cosmopolitan* Educational Department
119 West Fortieth Street, New York

This is one of a series of educational articles appearing in Cosmopolitan every month.

Cosmopolitan Educational Guide

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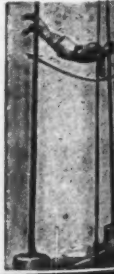
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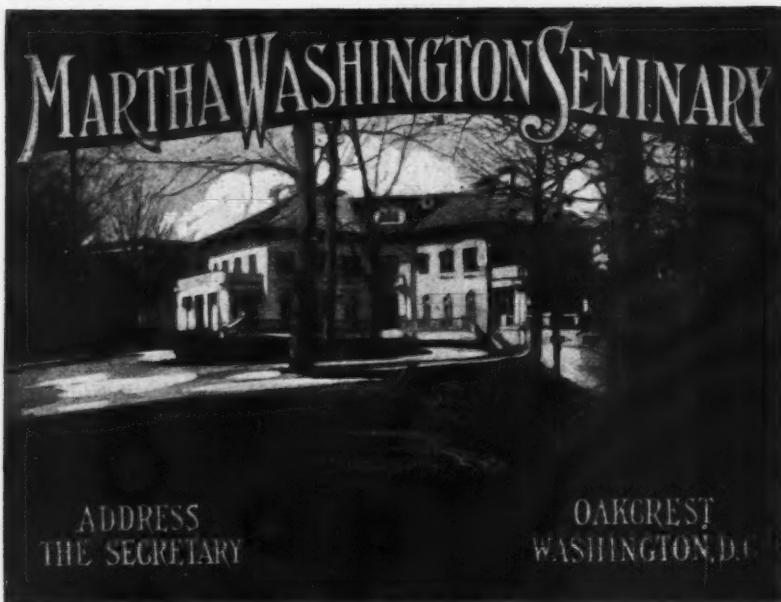
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Life's Canvas

By Edgar A. Guest

Sunshine and shadow and laughter and tears,
These are forever the paints of the years,
Splashed on the canvas of life day by day,
We are the artists, the colors are they.
We are the painters, the pigments we use
Never we're wholly permitted to choose.
Grief with its gray tint and joy with its red
Come from life's tubes to be blended and spread.

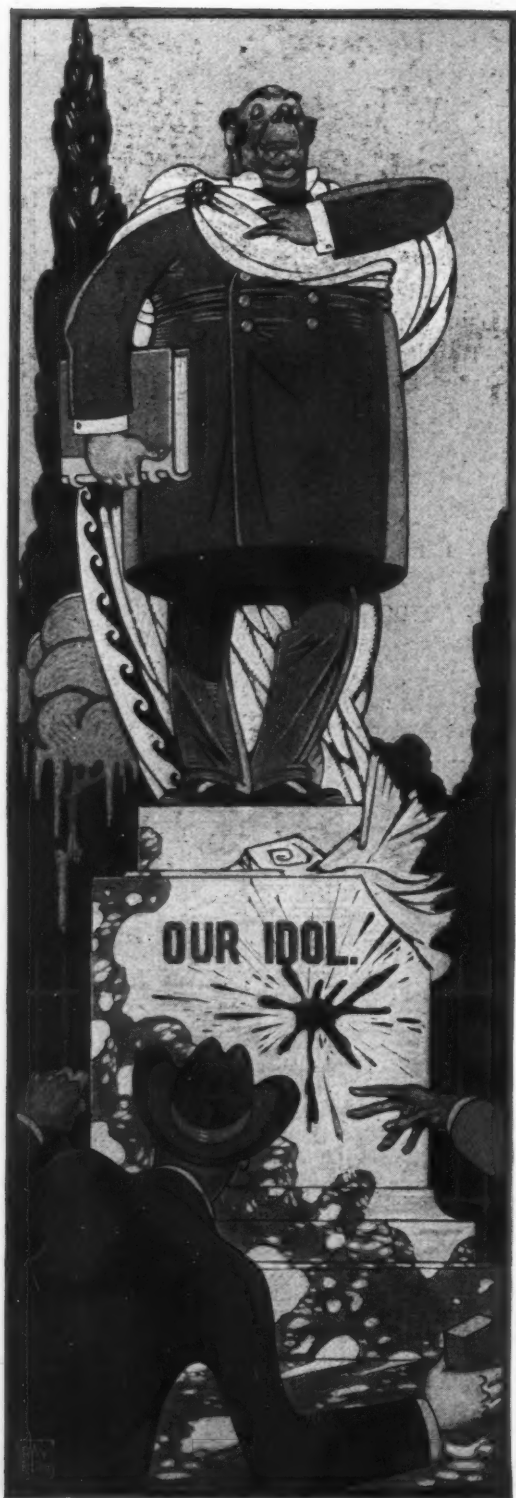
Here at the easel, the brushes at hand,
Each for a time is permitted to stand.
White was the canvas when first we began,
Ready to picture the life of a man.
Now we are splashing the pigments about,
Knowing the reds and the blues must give out,
Soon we must turn to the dull hues and gray,
Painting the sorrows that darken the way.

Now with the sunshine and now with the shade
Slowly but surely the picture is made.
Even the gray tints with beauty may glow
Recalling the joy of the lost long ago.
Let me not daub it with doubt and despair,
Deeds that are hasty, unkind and unfair,
But when the last bit of pigment is dried
Let me look back at my canvas with pride.

Let me when trouble is mine to portray,
Dip, with good courage, my brush in the gray;
After the tears and the grief let there be
Something of faith for my children to see.
Lord, let me paint not in anger or hate,
Grant me the patience to work and to wait,
Make me an artist, though humble my style,
And let my life's canvas show something worth while.

The Dead One on a Pedestal is a STATUE

Illustrations by Ray Rohn



UNLESS you live in a barrel, a lot of people are using you as an excuse for conversation. The general average of what they say decides your rating and establishes your shortage of good repute.

You cannot escape public opinion even by going to Europe or to a cemetery.

The public is watching you when you don't see it or them. It is the world's largest detective force, all the shoes rubber-soled and an eye at every keyhole.

It is a large, vague something—always lurking just beyond the corner—apparently comatose but really most wide awake, especially when scandal is being broadcast.

The brittle image of respectability thinks he is a permanent decoration. The ambushed public finds the range, opens up on him, and only fragments remain.

The public is as changeable as weather in Chicago and as fickle as a college widow.

We select a modest and protesting brother and boost him up to a high and wobbly pedestal. Then we begin looking around for brickbats.

The genius with double-O spectacles labors for twenty years to get the attention of the public. Then, when all of the scrutinizing stares are focused on him, he swoons with stage fright.

When you feel the heavy hand of Public Recognition laid on your shoulder, you don't know whether you are going to get a hug and a kiss or a swift kick.

Can there be a more terrifying realization than that of awakening at the usual hour to find a laurel wreath riveted on the marble brow?

The Live One is a TARGET *Says George Ade*

The dream of years has been to get the name on the large billboards. At last the 24-sheets begin to shriek from every open lot and the victim is compelled to walk in the alleys.

The I-knew-him-whens perform incredible memory feats and bring out all the hideous episodes of long ago just as soon as the press agent begins to work overtime.

If any movie actor ever stopped to pick a primrose; all the botany classes in America will know the facts sooner or later.

A public character is one whose name appears in the newspapers.

If he contrives to *keep* his name in the papers, he is privately scorched as a grand-stander.

If he permits his name to drop *out* of the papers, he is more or less scorned as a has-been.

If he does not accumulate money after building up a trade-mark, he is a failure.

If he prospers sinfully, he is a self-advertiser, marketing his notoriety.

The mistake he made was in not entering a monastery at the age of twenty-two.

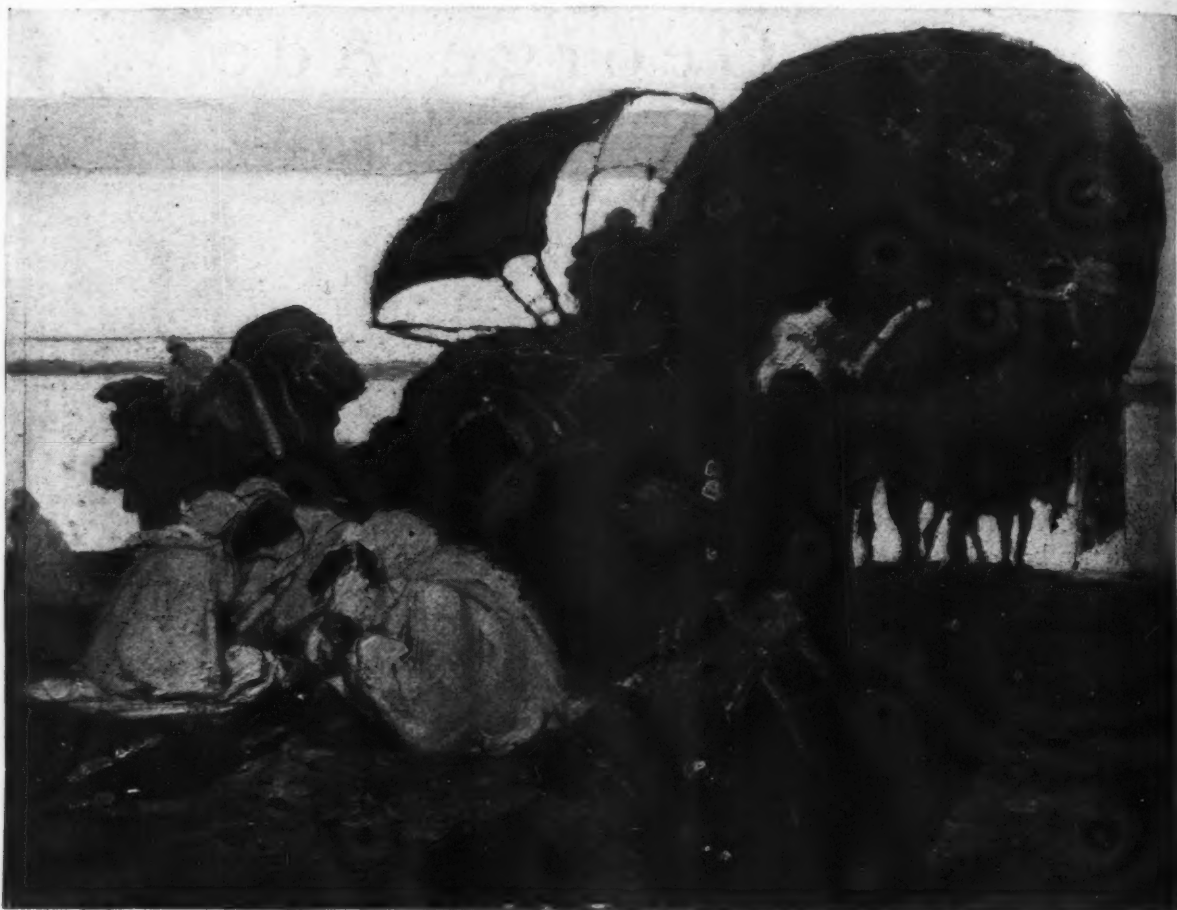
We fear the public and yet we continue our flirtatious signals to attract attention. We stir up the animals and then complain every time we get a bite in the leg.

We are like the flapper who toils before the mirror for two hours and then hits the boulevard with tottering heel. Most of her maidenly charms are exposed to the bright sunlight. A young man with a hatband follows her and she appeals to a policeman.

Which revives the old question: "Why bait the hook unless you want a strike?"



A New Love Story of the Desert by that R



The Desert

By E.^{dith} M.^{aude} HULL

THE slanting rays of the afternoon sun, unusually powerful for the time of year, lay warmly on the southern slopes of a tiny spur of the Little Altas Mountains, glowing redly on the patches of bare earth and naked rock cropping out between the scrubby undergrowth that straggled sparsely up the hillside, and flickering through the leaves of a clump of olive trees huddled at its base where three horses stood tethered, lazily switching at the troublesome flies with their long tails and shifting their feet uneasily from time to time.

Ten miles away to the westward lay Blidah, Europeanized and noisy, but here was the deep stillness and solitude—though not the arid desolation—of the open desert. The silence was broken only by the monotonous cooing of pigeons and the low murmur of voices.

At a little distance from the picketed horses, out in the full sunshine, a man lay on his back on the soft ground apparently asleep, his hands clasped under his head, his face almost hidden by a sun helmet beneath the brim of which protruded grotesquely a disreputable age-black pipe which even in sleep his teeth held firmly. There were amongst William Chalmers's patients and intimate acquaintances those who affirmed positively that that foul old meerschaum—treasured relic of his hospital days—ranked second in his affections only to the adored wife who was sitting now near his recumbent figure. Alert and youthful looking in spite of her gray hairs, she lounged comfortably against a sun-warmed rock talking animatedly yet softly to the third member of the party, a well set up man of soldierly appearance who sprawled full length at her feet. There was a certain

definite resemblance between the two, that proclaimed a near relationship.

"All the same, I think it's perfectly disgraceful that you are still a bachelor, Mickey," said Mrs. Chalmers with emphatic cousinly candor. Major Meredith grinned with perfect good humor.

"Haven't time for matrimony," he answered lazily. "Too busy watching our wily brothers over the border."

Mrs. Chalmers wrinkled her nose at him disgustedly.

"A year at home after nearly ten years of exile will probably make you change your mind. It's a pity you didn't take your leave sooner; there were some charming girls here last winter. Unfortunately this year's sample is not recommendable; there is scarcely a really nice girl in the place—always excepting Marny Geradine, and she's married already—poor child."

"Why 'poor child'?" asked the soldier.

"Because——" Mrs. Chalmers paused, frowning. "Oh, well, you haven't seen Lord Geradine or you wouldn't ask!"

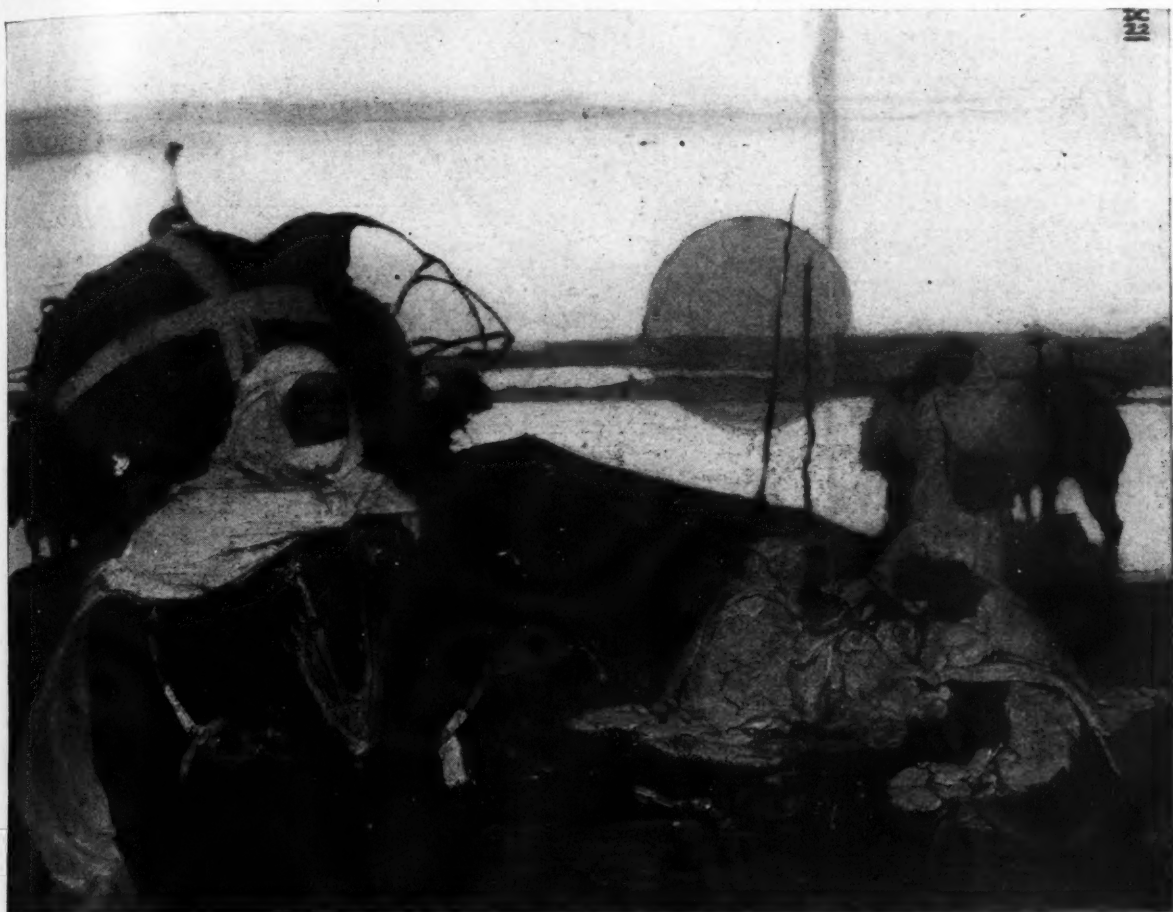
"A case of a misfit marriage?"

"Marriage! It isn't a marriage, it's a crime. It makes my blood boil to think of it. I'd give a great deal to be able to help her; she seems so lonely and there is tragedy staring at you out of her eyes. But of course one can't do anything."

For a time she sat silent.

"There is a great deal that wants putting right in the world,

hat Remarkable Woman Who Wrote The SHEIK



t H E A L E R

Illustrations by
Dean Cornwell

Mickey," she went on with ungrammatical decisiveness, "but I'm not going to spoil a perfect afternoon by moralizing. It has been jolly, hasn't it? I thought you would like this little valley. It is sad to think that it is our last visit and that in a few weeks we shall have shaken the dust of Algeria off our feet. We are off to America as soon as may be to investigate some new nerve treatment Bill is interested in. So, you see, you only just caught us in time. It's been a hectic fortnight, but I've enjoyed every minute of it, and I think we've managed to show you all the sights of Algiers.

"But I do regret one thing—I wish you could have seen our mystery man. He is quite a feature of the place. An Englishman who lives like an Arab—you needn't pull a face, Mickey. I don't mean that he has 'gone native' or anything horrid of that kind; he is *much* too dignified. But he lives in a sort of splendid isolation in the loveliest villa in Mustapha, with a retinue like a chief's. And though he is tremendously popular with the French officers and all the important sheiks who come into Algiers, he pointedly avoids his fellow countrymen. And he won't speak to or even look at a woman! He wears Arab dress most of the time and would pass for a native anywhere. He lives for months together in the desert and descends on Algiers at irregular intervals. And he obviously has heaps of money—and it's a gorgeous villa. He might be such an acquisition to the place, but as it is he is merely an intriguing personality

who is 'wropt in mystery,' as old Nannie used to say. Needless to add that in a place like this, where we all discuss our neighbors, he is the subject of endless speculation. But nobody really knows anything about him."

A faint chuckle came from behind Doctor Chalmers's big sun helmet. "I'm sorry to contradict you, Mollie, but that is not strictly accurate," he said sleepily.

His wife sat up with a jerk. "Who knows?" she challenged. "Well—I do, for one," replied Doctor Chalmers coolly.

"You know, Bill—and you've never said. How like a man! But since you have admitted so much you can sooth my outraged feelings by imparting a little more."

Doctor Chalmers laughed and stretched lazily. "Can't be done," he replied succinctly.

"Why not? I wouldn't tell a soul. Don't be tiresome, Bill. Expound."

But the doctor shook his head. "My dear Mollie," he expostulated, fingering the old pipe tenderly, "a confidence is a confidence and I can't break it simply to satisfy your curiosity, natural though it may be."

"But, Bill, one hears such queer stories——"

"Queer stories be hanged, m'dear. A silly lot of idiotic gossip—this place is rotten with it. I bet the queer stories you speak of emanate from your blessed feminine tea parties. Trust a woman to invent a mystery——"

"But, Bill, he is mysterious."

"Rubbish, Mollie. He prefers to make his friends amongst the French and he hates women—that's the sum total of his crimes as far as I'm aware."



"Bill, you're horrid. Men gossip just as much as women."
 "They may, my dear; but in Algiers it is not the men who gossip about Carew. And for the short time we remain in this hotbed of intrigue you will oblige me by contradicting, on my authority, any silly stories you may hear about him. He's a friend of mine. I value his friendship and I won't have him adversely discussed in my house. Gervas Carew is one of the whitest, cleanest men I have ever met."

Major Meredith looked up with a sudden start.

"Gervas Carew!" he said quickly. "Sir Gervas Carew?"

The doctor shrugged. "I believe so," he said guardedly, "though he doesn't seem to have any use for the title. He drops it here in Algeria. And if you have anything detrimental to say about him I'd rather not hear it," he added shortly, with a sudden flicker of anger in his sleepy blue eyes.

But Major Meredith was obviously not listening.

"Gervas Carew—after all these years!" he ejaculated. "So your mystery man, Mollie, turns out to be Gervas Carew. Gad, what a small place the world is! Poor old Gervas—of all people!"

Mrs. Chalmers's eyes danced with excitement. She laid an impatient hand on her cousin's shoulder and shook him vigorously.

"If you don't say something more explicit in a minute, Mickey, I shall scream. It's no good sitting there looking as if you had seen a ghost and murmuring tragically 'poor old Gervas'; you've simply got to explain."

Meredith turned slowly and looked at her through narrowing eyelids. "Give a dog a bad name, and hang him," he said.

A grim smile of recognition flickered across Carew's face. "Thou Dog!" he thundered and leaped at Abdul el Dhib.

"From what you say, Mollie, Algiers appears to have been hanging Gervas Carew pretty thoroughly, and as he was my best friend once I think it is up to me to explain. You needn't go, Bill," he added hastily as the doctor heaved himself on to his feet with a smothered word of profanity. "You're seldom wrong in a diagnosis, old man, and you haven't made a mistake this time. It's not a long story, nor, unfortunately, an uncommon one."

"Carew and I were chums at Rugby, and until I got my commission and went to India. When he was about twenty-five, shortly after his father's death and he had succeeded to the title, he married. The girl, who was a few years younger than himself, was the worst kind of society production, artificial to her finger tips. I stayed with them on my first home leave and hated her at sight. But poor old Gervas was blindly in love. He worshiped the ground she walked on. She was beautiful, of course—one of those pale complexioned, copper haired women who are liable to sudden and tremendous passion—but Gervas

hadn't touched her. Mentally and morally he was miles above her. She was as incapable of appreciating the fineness of his character as he was of suspecting the falseness of hers. His love didn't content her and, though she was clever enough to hide it from him, she flirted shamelessly with every man who came to the house. She craved adulation. Anybody was fair game to her.

"Then the South African war broke out and I did all I could to get to the front but they sent me back to the frontier. And Gervas, who had always wanted to be a soldier and had had to content himself with the yeomanry, was in the seventh heaven, poor devil, and took a troop out to the Cape, largely composed of men off his own estate. He was invalided back to England after nine months to find that his wife had consoled herself in his absence with an Austrian Count, of sorts, and had cleared out with the blighter, abandoning Gervas's delicate baby.

"The child died the night Gervas reached home. I heard what happened from a mutual friend. For a few weeks he was to all intents and purposes out of his mind. He was in a very weak state from his wound, and the double shock of his wife's faithlessness and the baby's death—he was devoted to the little chap—was too much for him. Then he took up life again, but he was utterly changed. He divorced the woman that she might marry the man she had gone off with, and six months afterwards he disappeared.

"That's ten or twelve years ago and I've never been able to get into communication with him since. That's Gervas Carew's

Major Meredith prepared to follow but lingered for a moment beside his cousin, who had also risen to her feet.

"I need hardly add that what I've told you is entirely between ourselves, Mollie. I wish I could have seen the poor old chap, but as I'm off tomorrow that is hardly probable."

They mounted and moved off leisurely down the steep side of the hill, picking a careful way between rocks and scrub and cactus bushes until they reached a narrow track winding in and out at the foot of the mountain a few feet above the bed of the tiny ravine that separated it from the adjoining range.

The track was wide enough only for two to ride abreast and the doctor forged ahead, leaving his wife to follow with her cousin.

Mrs. Chalmers made no further reference to the story she had heard, but chatted instead of the neighborhood through which they were passing.

"These hills are a maze," she explained. "Some of the gorges are wider than this—perfect camping grounds. Very often a sheik will camp here on his way to Algiers. Extraordinarily interesting they are, especially the ones who come from the far south—the wildest creatures, with hordes of fierce retainers who look as if they would think nothing of murdering one just for the sheer fun of it. But they are always very nice to us—they like the English. Then again, we come here and ride for miles and never see a soul for days together."

"That is what one thinks on the Indian frontier but the beggars are there all the time," said Meredith with a quick smile. "You will be riding over a bit of country that you

wouldn't think could afford cover for a cat and *ping* goes a bullet past your head. If they weren't such thundering bad shots I, for one, should have been a goner years ago." He laughed light heartedly, and Mrs. Chalmers glanced at him curiously, marveling, as she had marveled frequently in the last fortnight, at the hazardous life that is some men's portion and the fatalistic indifference it usually engenders.

"I don't believe, after all, Mickey, that men like you ought to marry," she said pensively. Meredith laughed at the patently regretful tone of her voice.

But further conversation became for the time impossible. The rough track they were following grew narrower and less perceptible until it suddenly vanished altogether. Doctor Chalmers, who was some little distance ahead of them, had already disappeared from sight behind a jutting angle of rock. Following in single file they emerged into a wider, less rugged valley. A quarter of a mile away, at the entrance of the valley, Doctor Chalmers was waiting for them. As they neared he turned in the saddle, beckoning vigorously.

"You're in luck, Mickey," he shouted. "There's your man."

Following his pointing finger they saw a small party of horsemen galloping towards the mountains. The leader, who was riding slightly in advance of his escort, was distinguished from his white clad followers by an embroidered blue cloth burnous that billowed round him in swelling folds. With a little thrill of excitement Mrs. Chalmers glanced quickly at her cousin, and decided for the second time that day that men were queer creatures. It was to be supposed that his inward gratification would take some outward and visible form. He sat instead motionless on his fretting horse, in

very obvious hesitation.

It was Doctor Chalmers who rode forward and waved his hand with a welcoming shout. And for a moment it seemed as if his greeting was going to pass unrecognized. The horsemen were nearly abreast of them, riding at a tremendous pace; another moment and they would have swept past. Then, with a powerful jerk that sent the bright bay straight up into the air spinning high on his hind legs, the leader checked his mount suddenly. It was a common trick among the Arabs which Mrs. Chalmers had often witnessed, but she never watched it without a quickening heartbeat.

She was conscious of a feeling of extreme embarrassment at



story, Mollie. I can't give any explanation of his avoidance of English people except that he was always a very sensitive sort of chap. But I think that his present attitude towards women, at any rate, is understandable. There was one woman in the world for him—and she let him down."

There was a long silence after the soldier stopped speaking. Mrs. Chalmers sat very subdued, blinking away the tears that had risen in her eyes.

"I wish I'd known before, Mickey. I feel a beast," she said at last with regretful fervor.

"You might well," growled her husband unsympathetically, and stalked away to the horses.

To Hosein, imperturbable even in the face of this unprecedented spectacle, Carew vouchsafed only the curt explanation, "Abdul el Dhib."

the near presence of the man whose mysterious personality she had discussed freely with her circle of acquaintances during the last five years, but who now appeared to her in a new and totally different light. She determined to delay the inevitable meeting and lingered behind under pretext of rearranging her habit. Then she rode forward with unusual diffidence to join the three men who, dismounted, were now deep in conversation. They drew apart at her coming and Meredith effected the necessary introduction.

In response to Mrs. Chalmer's murmured greeting the tall, picturesque looking man who had turned almost reluctantly towards her replied briefly and bowed with grave, unsmiling aloofness that seemed consistent with the Arab robes he wore so naturally. She had a swift glimpse of a lean brown face, of a pair of dark blue somber eyes that did not quite meet her own, and then her husband's genial voice broke the threatening silence.

"Sir Gervas is camping in the neighborhood, Mollie. He wants Mickey to wait over until the later train. We shall have to push on, as I promised to be in Algiers early this evening," he explained, preparing to remount. "Your train leaves Blidah at eleven, Mickey," he added. "And, Carew, the horse is André's. See that he gets back all right to the cavalry barracks, will you? Ready, Mollie? Then take hold of that beast of yours. We shall have to run for it."

Nodding briefly, Carew signed to his servants to bring up the spirited bay that had been removed from the proximity of the other horses. As they rode along together Meredith tried in



vain to trace in this grave, taciturn individual some resemblance to the gay, happy-go-lucky Gervas Carew of long ago. He wondered if, alone, he would even have known him. To Meredith the face of his old friend had become the face of a stranger, hardened, remolded almost, until even the contour seemed different. Other changes too became gradually evident. The restless impatience that Meredith remembered had given place to a calm



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imperturbability that was more oriental than occidental. There was a dignity and stateliness in his bearing that contrasted forcibly with his former boyish impulsiveness. Of the old Gervas Carew there was clearly nothing left, and the new Gervas seemed reluctant to reveal himself. The threads, too, of the early acquaintance were curiously difficult to pick up.

Once only during the half hour ride did Carew open his

mouth. He turned and looked critically at Meredith's mount.

"Shall we let them out?" he said slowly, with a certain hesitation in his voice as if his mother tongue came unnaturally. "André's horses have a reputation."

And as they raced neck and neck towards the north over the broken country that bordered the foothills they were skirting, Meredith found a certain measure of satisfaction in the fact that

one interest at least had survived the general upheaval. Carew had always been a horseman and a lover of horses. More than ever did he seem so now. It was one bond of sympathy remaining, Meredith reflected, and sat down to ride as he had rarely ridden in his life.

His borrowed horse responded gallantly to the effort demanded of him but the pace was punishing and the animal's satiny neck grew dark and seamed with sweat as he strained to keep up with the bay that showed no sign of distress and seemed to be rather checked than urged by his rider. And with the perspiration pouring down his own face Meredith was not sorry when a sudden curve in the hillside revealed a deserted fruit farm with Carew's camp scattered amongst the orange trees.

The big double tent of the owner was pitched at some distance from those of his followers. All about were horses and camels, tethered or wandering at will, and a small army of Arabs languidly fulfilling the various duties of the camp or squatting idly on their heels engaged in endless argument.

But the return of the master roused his retainers to



"From the desert come the wildest creatures, who look as though they would think nothing of murdering one for the sheer fun of it."

sudden and spontaneous activity, and Meredith noted with a smile of approval the evident signs of discipline and authority. Waiting grooms sprang to the horses' heads and the soldier slid out of the saddle with a grunt of relief.

"Do you usually ride at that pace?" he inquired, laughing.

Carew turned from fondling the big bay that was nuzzling him affectionately.

"Pretty usually," he answered. "It's a bad habit one catches in the desert. But I've always wanted to try Suliman against that gray of André's. He had him beaten from the start," he added with a faint smile. "Come and have a drink." And he

led the way under the lance-propped awning into the cool dimness of the tent.

Meredith glanced about him with interest. The costly but sparse furnishings were almost entirely of the country; a small camp table and a solitary deck chair, the sole concessions to European taste, looked incongruous in conjunction with the low inlaid stools and gay brocaded silk mats that were purely Arab. A wide divan, heaped with heavy cushions and covered with a couple of leopard skins, stood in the center of the room. Looped back curtains of gold-embroidered silk hung before the entrance to the inner sleeping apartment.

At first sight Meredith thought the tent empty. But as his eyes grew accustomed to the soft light he saw, in a far corner, the slender figure of a child sitting on the ground swaying gently to and fro, his handsome little face upturned in rapt devotion

as he crooned softly to himself while the beads of a long rosary slipped through his small brown fingers. The thick rugs on the floor deadened the sound of their footsteps and for a moment the entrance of the two men passed unnoticed. Then Carew moved and his foot struck sharply against a small brass bowl.

At the sound the lad stopped swaying and sat rigid as if listening intently, his face turned eagerly towards them. Then with a glad cry he tossed the rosary away and scrambling to his feet came flying across the tent with outstretched hands. A thick cushion that in its bright hues covering appeared perfectly obvious against the dark rug lay directly in his path but he blundered straight into it and fell headlong before Carew could catch him.

As Meredith watched the big man bending over the little white clad figure and saw the stern lines of his face change into a wonderful tenderness, and heard the sudden gentleness of his voice as he murmured in soft quick Arabic, he recollected with a feeling of acute dismay the "queer stories" that Mollie Chalmers had referred to. Was this, then, the solution of Carew's protracted sojourns in the desert? Sudden pity contended with repulsion as he remembered Carew's devotion to his tiny son, and the tragedy that had robbed him of his child. Had the ardent desire for parenthood that had formerly been so strong in him risen even against racial restrictions and the misogyny with which he was now credited?

Meredith was relieved when his disturbing thoughts were interrupted. The boy was on his feet again, talking excitedly, but Carew silenced him with a hand on his shoulder.

"There is a guest, Saba," he said in French. "Salute the English lord, and go bid Hosein hasten with the cooling drink."

Suddenly shy, the boy moved forward, bending his supple little figure in a deep salaam. Then, drawing himself erect, he lifted his face to Meredith's with a curiously uncertain movement. And looking down into the beautiful dark eyes raised to his the soldier saw the reason for that hasty tumble and an involuntary exclamation escaped him. He looked inquiringly at his host.

Carew nodded. "Yes, he's blind," he said in English, "but you needn't pity him. He has never known anything different and he is a thoroughly happy little imp." And drawing the boy to him with a quick caress he set him with his face towards the door and watched him grope his way from the tent.

Then, pulling forward the deck chair, he placed cigarettes beside his guest.

From behind a cloud of smoke Meredith spoke with obvious constraint.

"I'm awfully sorry—" he began awkwardly, and something in his voice made Carew turn quickly to look at him.

For a moment his somber eyes rested on the soldier's embarrassed face; then he shook his

head with a grave smile that had in it a trace of bitterness.

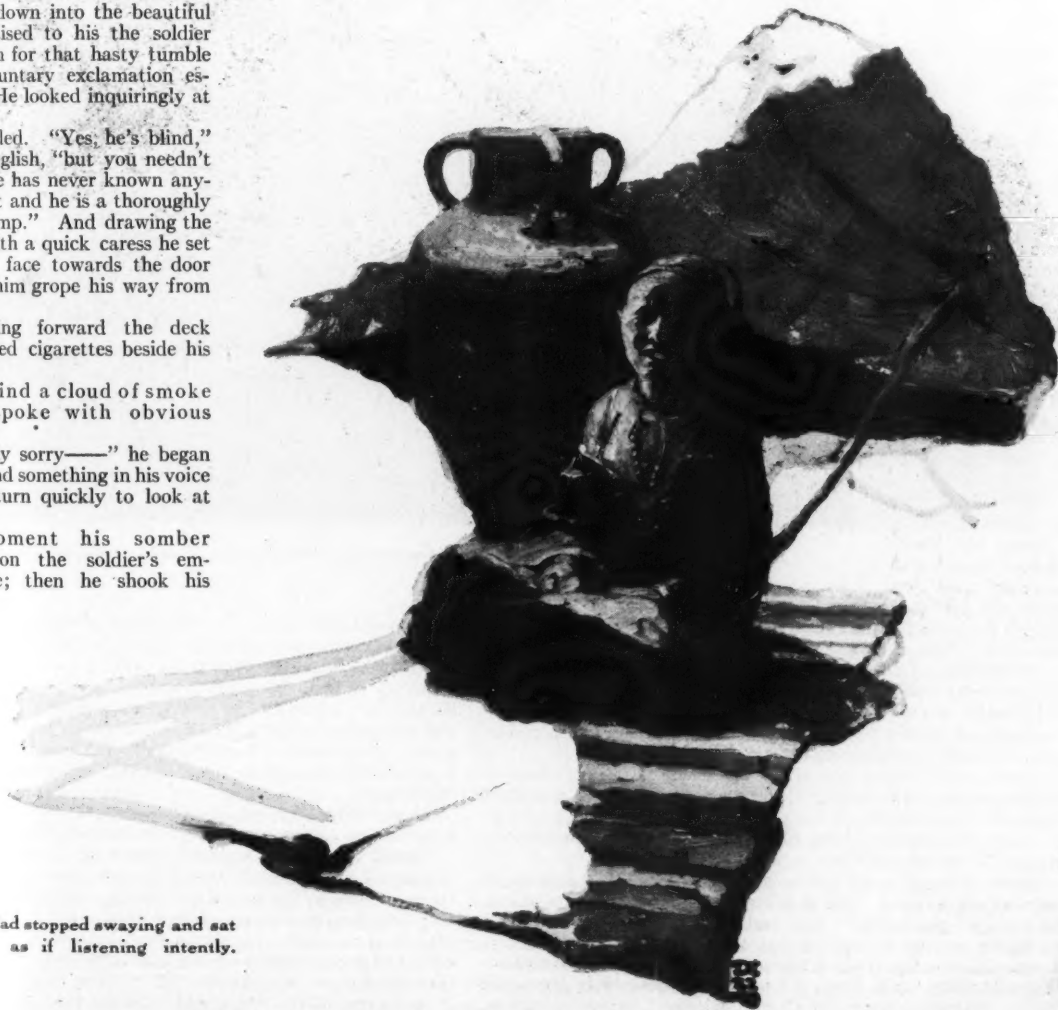
"It's not what you think," he said evenly, "though I admit the thought is natural. He is not mine—sometimes I wish to God he were. He's only a waif picked up in the desert, five or six hundred miles away in the south, there. I found him six years ago when I was helping to clean up an Arab raid, lying across his dead mother's body and whimpering like a hungry kitten. He wasn't more than a year old. I've had him ever since. I don't think I could get on without the little chap now. He's an interest and fills up my time when I'm not otherwise occupied—fills it pretty completely too, for he is as sharp as a needle and when the mood takes him as keen on mischief as any boy with the full use of his eyes. But tell me about yourself. Are you still on the Frontier?"

And Meredith, keenly anxious to renew the old intimacy, let himself be drawn out and talked of his life on the Indian Border as he had never talked of it before. Baldly and jerkily at first and then with increasing ease he spoke of the years of arduous work, of perilous journeys and hairbreadth escapes and strange experiences.

For an hour or more his quiet voice went on until the lengthening shadows deepened into blackness; until Carew, sitting Arab fashion on the divan, was almost invisible and only the glowing end of his cigarette revealed his presence. And Meredith, the first plunge made, found him curiously easy to talk to, curiously knowledgeable too. From one or two comments he let fall Meredith was inclined to believe that the watching game was no new one to him and the knowledge made his own tale less difficult to tell.

He stopped at last and groped for the matches on the stool beside him.

"That about lets me out," he said as he lighted a cigarette.



The lad stopped swaying and sat rigid as if listening intently.

Carew rose and going to the tent door clapped his hands.

"You're doing a big work, Mickey," he said as he came back slowly through the gloom. "You'll end on the Indian Council if you don't take care," he added with almost the old bantering note in his voice.

"If I don't end with a bullet through my head, which is much more probable," replied Meredith with a quick laugh, blinking at the lighted lamps that were being brought into the tent.

During the dinner that followed, the conversation was mainly of Algeria. But though Carew discussed the country and its conditions, its people and the sport it afforded, of his own life there he said nothing. The past was evidently a sealed book that he had no intention of reopening. It was not until later when they were sitting out in the darkness under the awning that the soldier put the question he had been trying to ask all evening. He twisted in his chair to get a better view of the starry heavens and blurted out his question:

"Why didn't you write, old man?"

For a long time there was no answer and he mentally kicked himself for a blundering fool. Then Carew's deep voice, deeper even than usual, came out of the darkness.

"I couldn't. I tried once—but there seemed nothing to say. I hoped you would understand."

Meredith moved uncomfortably. "I was—damned sorry," he muttered gruffly.

Carew lighted a fresh cigarette slowly.

"You needn't waste any sympathy on me, Mickey," he said with a sudden hard laugh. "I was a fool once—but I learned my lesson—thoroughly."

There was another long silence. Then Meredith asked abruptly: "Why Algeria?"

Carew shrugged. "I had to go somewhere. The house—its associations—was a hell I wasn't strong enough to stand. So I played the coward's part and ran away. My people used to winter in Algiers when I was a boy. I liked the country. It seemed the natural place to come to, somehow." He paused. When he spoke again it was in a voice that was new to Meredith. "It's a wonderful place, the desert, Mickey," he said dreamily.



But though Carew discussed the country and its conditions, of his own life

"It gets you in the end—if you go far enough and stay long enough. It's got me all right. I don't suppose I shall ever leave it now. The mystery of it, the charm of it—always new, never the same, changing from day to day. And its moods—my God, Mickey, its moods! The peace of Heaven one moment and the fury of Hell let loose the next. Cruel but beautiful, pitiless but fascinating. And somehow one forgets the cruelty and only the beauty remains—the beauty of its wonderful solitudes, its marvelous emptiness."

"And being there—what do you do?" Meredith asked and wondered if Carew would consign him to the devil.

"What do I do?" repeated Carew slowly. "That was the question I asked myself when I came to Algeria, when I seemed to have come to the end of everything—'what shall I do?' My first trip into the desert settled that quickly enough. I had always been interested in the Arabs—I spoke the language as early as I spoke English—but I only knew the Arabs of the towns. So I went down into the south to see the real life of the desert. I met some of the old sheiks who used to come into Algiers



he said nothing. The past was evidently a sealed book that he had no intention of reopening.

when I was a boy and who still remembered my father. They made it easy for me and passed me on into districts where otherwise I could never have penetrated, and I saw more than I had ever hoped to see. I started my wanderings with no higher motive than curiosity—and a desire to get away from my own thoughts. It had never occurred to me that up till then I had led an utterly purposeless life, that not a soul in the world was the better for my being in it. But out there in the desert the crying need I found forced me to think, for the reckless waste of life and the ghastly unnecessary suffering I saw appalled me. I knew that one man could not do much—but he could do something. “It didn’t take me long to make up my mind. The old life was over. I wanted a new life that wouldn’t give me time to think, that would give me opportunity to help the people I had professed to be interested in. I went to Paris and studied medicine, specializing in surgery, and took my degree. Afterwards I put in six months with a man in Switzerland, a brute but a wizard with the knife, and then came back to Algeria. That’s what I do, Mickey.”

Meredith drew a deep breath. “And a fine thing too,” he said heartily. “It isn’t all plain sailing, I suppose?”

“Far from it,” replied Carew, “but it depends on the district, of course. Usually the beggars are grateful enough and I go pretty much where I please. But they are a naturally suspicious people and there are some places I can’t get into at any price. They think my work is a pretext and that I am really a spy of the government.”

“And are you?”

“Officially, no. But sometimes I see and hear things I think the government should know—it’s a difficult country to administer—and at times the government makes use of my knowledge. I have acted as intermediary more than once in negotiations with some of the outlying tribes where it would be impossible to send a regular accredited agent without a regiment to back him up—and that usually ends in fighting which the government tries to avoid. There’s unrest enough in the south without stirring up any more trouble,” he added, turning to speak to a tall saturnine looking Arab who had (Continued on page 120)

A Visit to Longacre Square with O. O. McIntyre

Drawing by
Henry Raleigh



IT IS noon in Longacre Square. In front of the Palace Theater, vaudeville actors in belted coats, bowler derbies and other Piccadilly toggery from the "one flight ups" are back from "knocking them cold" in Grand Rapids and spurning fat parts from Dave and Lee and Flo.

Out of the side street in the Furious Forties seeps a roguishly rouged *nymph du pave*. She, like her innumerable sisters, has been fed to Broadway from the prairie cottage and the village street.

She cheekily tosses her meaningless smiles to lure the ready luncheon buyer. Her breakfast, an hour ago, was the chorine's morning fare—"The Morning Telegraph and a cigarette." She laughs from the lips outward. For ladies must live.

The freshly barbered yogis of the flesh, obeying Nietzsche's problematical advice, "Be Hard! Live Dangerously!" are milling about in the eternal quest. The luncheon hour is the hour for conquests.

At Herald Square stands Blue Pete, a blind pencil seller whose mere hand wave a few years ago unleashed the silken entrance ropes from Rector's to uptown Bustanoby's.

Northward, toward Columbus Circle, at night is etched in letters of fire the name of a Broadway star, a whirling bit of tinsel, who the same few years ago cried "Cash!" in a Topeka five and ten.

Today she receives the Broadway accolade. And Blue Pete its scantest pity.

It is the way of Broadway to welcome its heroes to prove them clay; to scoff its dreamers to acclaim them great. In the shifting kaleidoscope the obscure grow opulent and the haughty humble.

The pauper of today is the prince of tomorrow. And the prince of today may be the pauper of tomorrow.

Tin Pan Alley sings truly of this modern Appian Way as a lane of smiles and tears, a highball and a headache, a rose with thorny stems.

Yet in spite of its tawdry gaiety, Broadway is a definite part of the national consciousness—an overworked city in cap and bells.

Near the out of town newspaper hutchers lounge derbied men

with square-toed shoes, the insignia of Central Office, waiting for some homesick fugitive who seeks a breath of news from the folk back yonder.

A battered champion of yester year, groping about in an unreal world of drugs, does his daily afternoon shadow boxing. He, too, was once a Broadway idol.

"Old Horse and Wagon," Manhattan's only Chinese vagrant, shuffle-trots his way through the crowds humming his Chinatown version of the ancient classic:

*That nightie time, he come chop chop,
Young man walkee, no can stop.
Maskee snow, maskee ice,
He cally flag with chop so nice.
Topside gallow!*

Matinée idols stroll to the life that begins with them at two-fifteen. Wide-eyed maidens carry their fudge and bon-bons to the orchestra pits. Streams of motorcars ebb and flow as the sluice gates of traffic rise and fall. Stage doormen puffing at peaceful pipes seem oddly detached from the world about them.

Beggars swarm about the projecting hotel canopies. Broadway, well fed, is generous. Alongside the Claridge an old Arab in his invalid chair grinds out wheezy tunes as a moth-eaten monkey collects the pennies.

Once Ali jumped four camels in a row at the Hippodrome. Then one night he missed.

As evening nears, the plaintive moan of the saxophone is heard in the dansant. Oppressively sophisticated flappers and cake eaters start the first round of the evening pleasures while New York rushes homeward.

Lights pop! The White Way gleams with its million lights, like clustered stars caught in the silken web of night. The Broadway fires are burning.

"Crying Mary," who has lost the use of her tear ducts, takes her stand in the shadows of the Times Building, a hooded Niobe, weeping for coins to carry her back to her home in Jersey. Her tears, like those of Broadway, are fickle. She lives not in Jersey but in a Bronx apartment house with a marble façade—a monument to her fitful weeping.

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Hard by the Metropolitan Opera House, Joel's serpentine sign winks welcome in brilliant green. By day Joel writes ponderous tomes on the polygeneric theory and by night serves *frijoles colorados* to artists, writers and the demi-mondaine.

His walls are lined with original cartoons and gilt signs urging "piff-awmers" to bank their money with him while trouping. Joel knows what it is to be broke on Broadway.

Across Forty-second Street a toad-like little man with a leonine head—a great criminal lawyer—walks at the side of the Tenderloin's greatest gambler. He has never flinched as fortunes went with the flip of a card. They are discussing rare first editions.

Stolpin's, a gay little theatrical café, buzzes with the evening clientèle—the "fill-in" folk from the two-a-day, the merriest and most underpaid in the profession.

There are ground and table tumblers, wire and rope walkers, dare-devils of the trapeze and Roman rings, knife throwers, foot and hand jugglers, mouth and teeth whistlers and bird and dog act men who gather together to eat puff-waffles, drink black coffee and spin tales to shame the Arabian Nights.

Bolted basement doors in the French cafés open to the correct push-button signal to reveal the red plush furniture and mirrors framed in lump gilt. And always a meowing cat.

They are the last stand of Broadway's *vin ordinaire* or "red ink" and are hallowed by the fruity memories of Mama Laloy and Papa Gaston and the sixty-cent table d'hôte.

Mama at the cashier's cage fashioned the Martini and the Bronx. She tossed in a luscious red cherry or a ripe green olive and a motherly pat on the cheek.

Now the Martini and the Bronx are served surreptitiously in broken tea cups. And diners sit timidly on the edge of chairs awaiting the police raiding ram.

Theater foyers fill with jewels and silk. The capricious Circe flaunts her paradise headdress. She has a day and night chauffeur and a Park Avenue apartment but there is languor in her throat. Last week the jury said she shot in self-defense.

Stage door Johns with patent leather hair, buck teeth and adenoidal smiles, simulate the worldly sin-stained while puffing papa's filched cigars.

Dowagers, aching with the effort to achieve one less chin by

spring, creak in suffocating dignity. Clubmen with telltale ochre smudges under tired eyes feign a vivacity they do not feel. All idle slaves to pleasure.

On the fringe of the jostling crowds whining their woe are the aged flower women, as wilted as their wares. And along the curb the flat-chested, colorless figures who hawk the birth control weeklies.

After the theater the street roar swells. The auto sirens, the souvenir shops' tinny pianos and the cry of late editions add their crash to the gathering crescendo.

Midnight brings the zero hour of Broadway's pleasure. The supper clubs, swept into amazing popularity by a reversion of the Volstead law's intent, are opened.

They are intimate little rooms with postage stamp dance floors and swathed in Babylonian splendor. The younger generation rides the saddle.

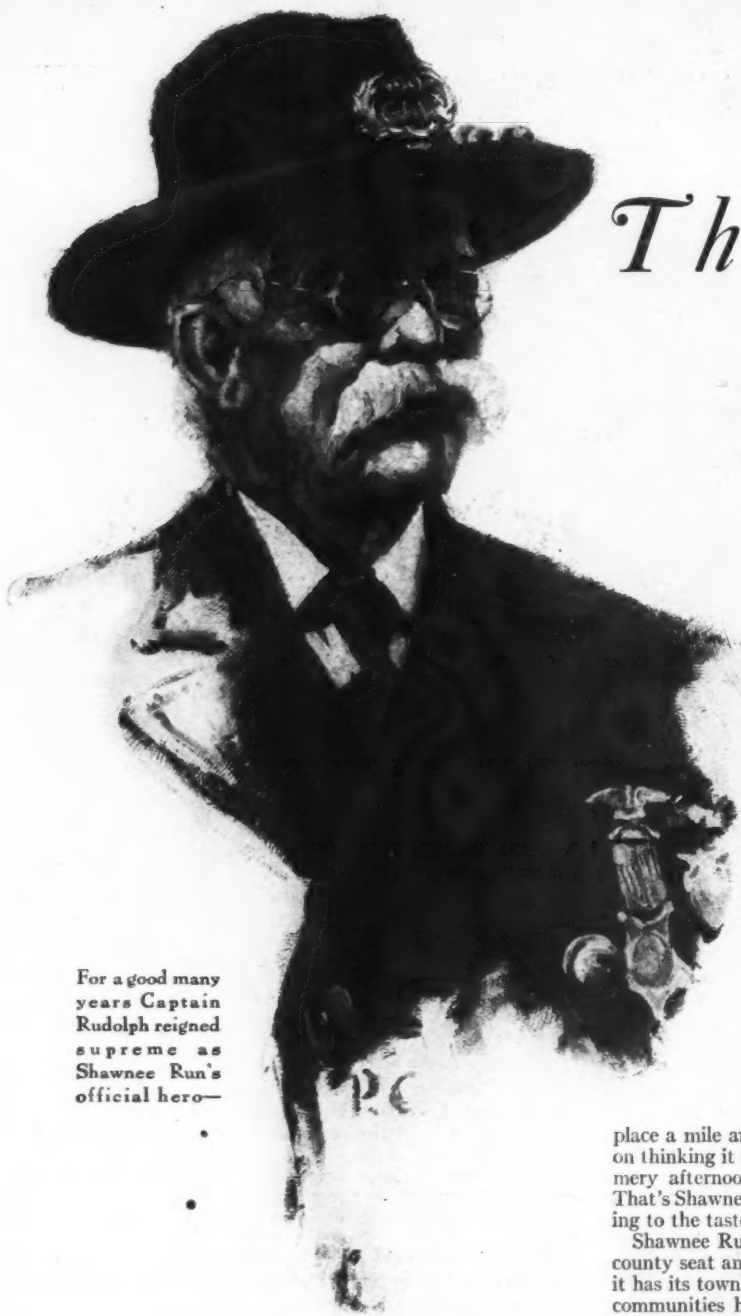
College striplings down from New Haven, the necks of gin bottles showing from dinner jackets, jazz away the lagging hours with girls from select boarding schools who have eluded chaperons.

The most exclusive chain of supper clubs is owned by a man who does not grace them with his presence. He battered his way up from East Side obscurity bringing indelible imprints of the fray—a foggy eye and caulflowered ear.

As dawn approaches pleasure is whipped to its whitest froth. A rising star of Broadway greets the blush of day poised on a table top. With a delicate flanged champagne glass aloft she cries throatily, after the manner of Ethel Barrymore: "I'm all the hell there is, there isn't any more."

Outside waiting at the entrance with soiled packets of chewing gum is a venerable crone. She is a fallen star in the Broadway constellation. But Broadway's light still calls her.

It is the light that never dims!



For a good many years Captain Rudolph reigned supreme as Shawnee Run's official hero—

BY RIGHTS this story should appear in the table of contents somewhere back of a cover showing two decrepit veterans, one in blue with a peaked cap, the other in gray with a slouch hat, clasping hands beneath the flag of a more or less reunited country. Or, if the magazine strove to be one of these right-up-to-the-minute magazines, the cover design would be that of a little child placing a memorial wreath upon a grave, with a sort of cloud effect of figures above her, featuring, among others, a Valley Forge fencible, an Andy Jackson rifleman, a Mexican War dragoon, a Gettysburg defender, a ninety-eight Rough Rider and an A. E. F. doughboy; in short, an allegorical and panoramic design. For this is a Decoration Day story, having to do with a thing which happened May 30, of this year, in the town of Shawnee Run, Indiana. The fact that it is being printed a good long while after last Decoration Day and a considerable while before next Decoration Day may seem, to a conscientious magazine editor, a bad business. Probably he has put it in this number under protest. But, either way, it makes no material difference in Shawnee Run. Shawnee Run is used to being six miles off the

I R V I N S

Present La

This Hero

Illustrations by Per

main road and six months behind the times.

In your day, if ever you have strayed from the beaten track anywhere in our glorious Middle West, which is so called because it is nowhere near the Middle and a long stretch this side of the West, you must have seen a score or more of Shawnee Runs. You pick out a bit of frayed selvage on the fringes of the Corn Belt and there you assemble a collection of a hundred and fifty-odd houses, mainly wooden houses, white with green shutters. You string most of these houses like beads upon a cord along a length of rutty main street which is all mud when it rains and all dust when it doesn't. Populate the spot with six hundred and forty individuals of assorted native types.

At the edge of town trace out a winding yellowish creek, with fine tall trees on its banks, and schools of small pan-fish in the deep holes below the drift jams left by the last high water. Put in three churches for religion's sake and a moving picture grotto for week-day entertainments; also a garage and a couple of filling stations. Establish your burying

place a mile and a half from town in a weed field, which insists on thinking it is a cemetery. Shake gently, and take some summery afternoon when you've nothing else particularly to do. That's Shawnee Run, and you'll find it mildly pleasant and soothing to the taste.

Shawnee Run may be forty minutes, by Tin Lizzie, from the county seat and an all day's run from the Lincoln Highway, but it has its town characters and its town institutions just as larger communities have them, and has also its traditional claims to fame. For instance, a man who once was favorably mentioned by himself and several of his friends for the nomination for vice-president lived in Shawnee Run. Likewise it is the birthplace of one of the most masterly and compelling orators in the present Lower House of Congress. This great man lends lustre to another state now and has done so since his early manhood, but here it was he first saw the light of day, and his former fellow citizens are proud of the circumstance. And finally, yet for the purposes of this narrative foremost, it has its official military heroes, two in number.

For a long while, though, it had only one—Captain Jer Rudolph, late of the One Hundred and Twenty-first Indiana Volunteers. Then, in the late fall of 1918, about the time the Armistice was signed, young Mort Overstreet came back from France, all crippled up, to make the second. By virtue of rule of seniority if for no other reason, it is fitting that, briefly, we first should consider the former.

For a good many years Captain Rudolph reigned, as the phrase is, supreme. Originally or, that is to say, immediately after the Civil War, there had been among the residents of Shawnee Run some ten or a dozen men who helped to hold the Union and loose the slave. Those were the times when there was an old soldier

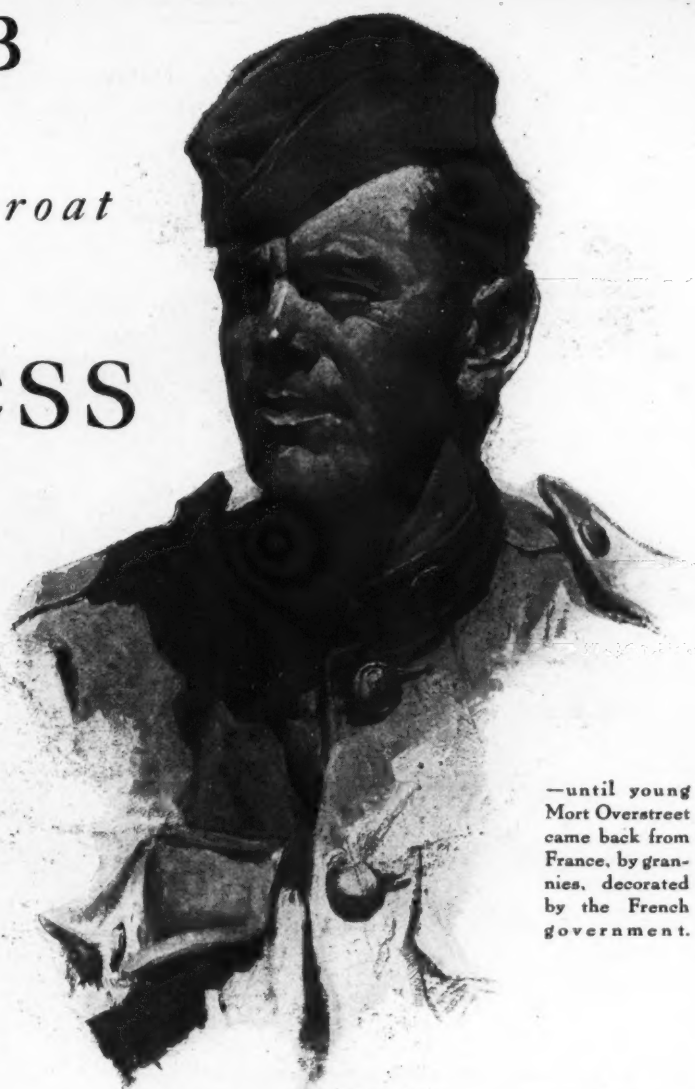
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NS. COBB

*Laughter—with a
Catch in its Throat*

Business

Percy Cowen



—until young
Mort Overstreet
came back from
France, by gran-
nies, decorated
by the French
government.

vote to be reckoned with; and politicians catered to it and played up to it and made the Bloody Shirt to wave in the breeze and drip anew. But one by one these others got old and grew fragile; one by one they sickened and dropped off. So, in due time, Cap'n Jere alone remained and he remained intact. It would seem that he meant to linger on forever. At any rate, he looked as though this might be his intention.

The years might nibble at him but they didn't bite in deeply. Generally, a man on reaching a certain age becomes paunchy and pouchy, or else he wastes away to a great thinness and the frame of his bones bends in and bends out like a trellis no longer able to bear the fading life draped over it. But Cap'n Jere stayed square and firm as a brick smokehouse. In fact, he rather would put you in mind of a smokehouse, a little solid one, built to stay. He was a small sandy-red man with a bullet head and short neck and humorous eyes. He was a widower and childless. He had some money laid by from his more active years and this and his pension kept him in comfort. He was past sixty before the white began to show, like silver wires, in his sorrel hair. He was getting along toward seventy before his legs began to skew under him and he needed a cane to walk with. He had carried a cane before then but for dignity's sake merely. Now he needed it. To the people of his home town he was a human symbol and inheritance of their patriotism and, by that same token, an institution. He made speeches on important occasions. He loved to make speeches. He was prominent at gatherings; no one disputed with him his right to the place of prominence. He was a public citizen and a public character. He was Shawnee Run's official hero.

Excuses were to be made for his occasional outbreaks of testiness, also for his inclination to repeat the same stock stories over and over again. Naturally a man who'd fought as bravely as Cap'n Jere had would have a high and touchy temper; choler marching with courage. And why shouldn't a man who had done spunky deeds on the field of battle be permitted, yea encouraged, to tell about them? Wasn't listening to him just about the same as reading history out of a book? And wasn't history frequently tiresome although important? Well, then?

It is true that when the Yanko-Spanko affair came along his glory suffered an eclipse. But it was only a partial eclipse and not for long. It would appear that Cap'n Jere resented the project of sending troops to make the Cubans free almost as one might resent a personal insult. It was as though he felt slighted somehow; as though, for the time being, his war and its survivors were being brushed aside to make way for a lot of bumptious amateurs. He couldn't understand, either, why an old company commander, still in the prime of his health and strength, knowing how to handle men and not afraid of the smell of powder smoke, wasn't offered a commission. He spoke of the whole

thing as a picnic. He called the first land encounter with the enemy a skirmish. The hysterical newspapers might speak of it as an engagement and a battle. He knew better—it was a skirmish, a brush between outposts. In his war it wouldn't have counted. They had battles then as were battles. Take Cold Harbor, now—or Shiloh or Missionary Ridge.

When he said this, on an evening in front of Biggs & McKenna's—and would have said much more except that he was interrupted—one of the assembled audience had the presumption rather to take issue with him. It was Banks Ferguson who took on the sacrilegious job of interruption.

"Well, say now, Cap'n Jere, you look here!" Ferguson said. "These boys that got killed yistiddy in this skirmish as you call it—ain't they been killed just as dead as anybody you knew that got killed fightin' the Rebels?"

There was a snicker from the group—a snicker of outright approval for the thrust. It was the first time such a thing ever had happened. Before this it would have seemed a sacrilege. In Cap'n Jere's affronted ears it was exactly that—a sacrilege and a mocking. He gave a tremendous snort and turned on his heel and went briskly away from there.

He got over his sulks soon, though. News of what happened on a May morning in foreign and far-off parts known as the Philippines previously had given him cheer; other things, subsequently occurring, likewise pleased him mightily. As he came stumping toward the loafing place one hot afternoon those already collected there saw that his face was red and radiant and they heard him shooting off his favorite expletive at every other step.

"Goddle Midey!" he was saying. "Goddle Midey!"

Once upon a time the Reverend Ames, pastor of the Baptist



Per E. Soern

church, had summoned spirit mildly to remonstrate with Cap'n Jere for his frequent use of certain words. He ventured to remind Cap'n Jere that the Good Book expressly forbade the taking of the name of Deity in vain.

"Why, Goddle Midey, elder!" Cap'n Jere had exploded. "That ain't cussin'! That's just the way I talk!"

Now he burst in among them and his voice, rising to a dominant bellow, submerged all lesser sounds of speech. They stopped talking about whatever it was they had been talking about and listened to him. They had to, that's all; there was nothing else for them to do.

"Goddle Midey, gentlemen! Did you read about what's happened—did you see what it says in the paper? Gen'l Joe Wheeler takin' his boys into action and yellin' to 'em 'Come on, boys—let's give the Yankees hell!' Forgettin', by gumies, that he was fixin' to lick a passel of those Spaniels, or whatever 'tis they call themselves in their native language, and thinkin' he was chargin' into us fellers again. Bet he knew the difference, though, when he hit their line—yes sirree bob!"

"Well, it all only goes to show that when they need somebody to lead 'em they pick out one of the veterans, Blue or Gray, it don't make no great matter which. These young West Pointers and these brash state guard officers are good enough for drillin' green hands in camp, I guess, but when the real fightin' starts who do they fall back on? On us old timers, that's who!"

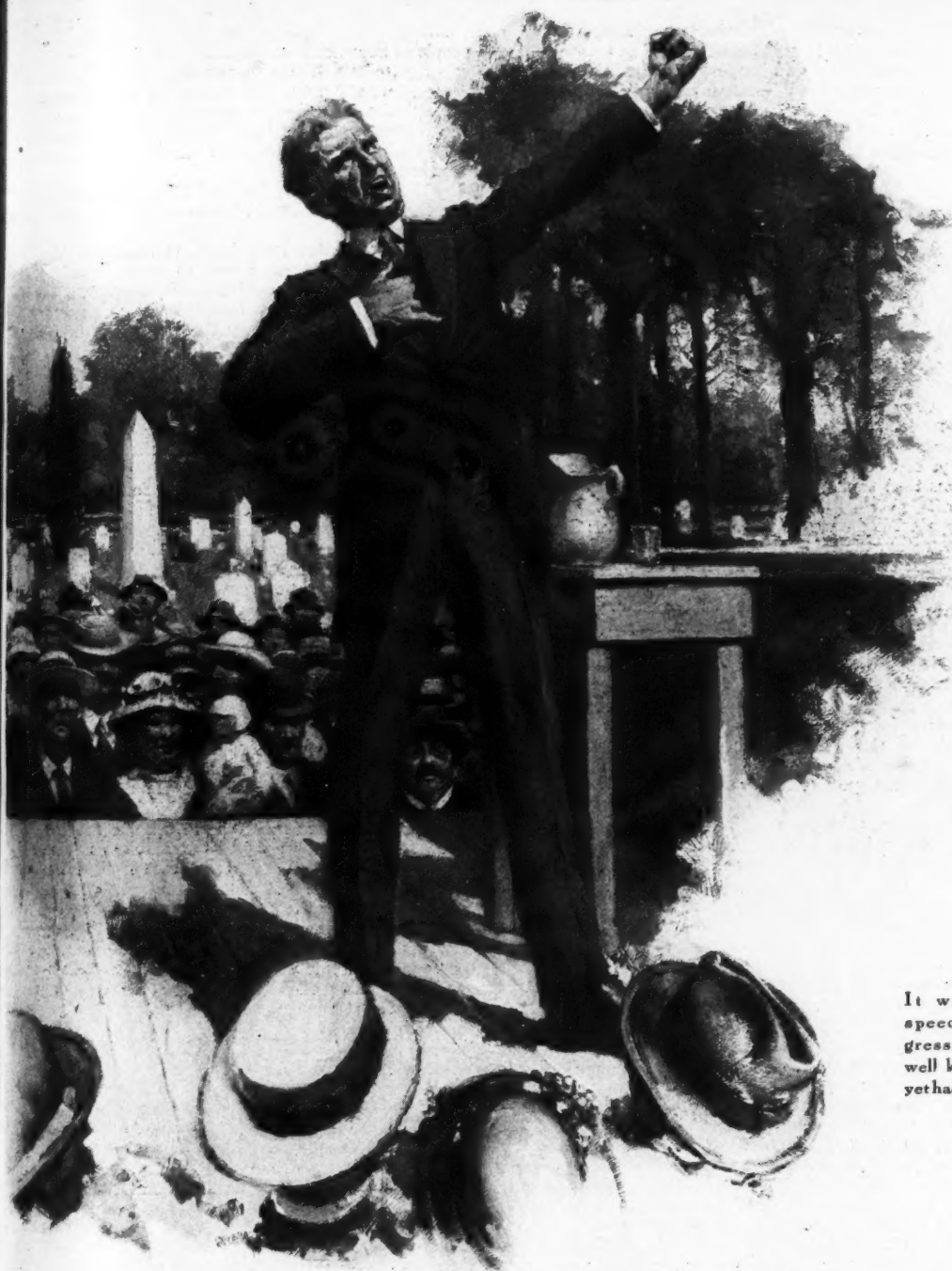
"Now, then, there's little old dried-up Joe Wheeler singin' out to his men to give the Yankees hell! Well, they weren't Yankees this time, but Goddle Midey, I'll promise you that hell was what he gave 'em just the same! He's quite a fightin' man, this feller Wheeler is. He may 'a' fought on the other side from me but you got to give the Devil his dues. I remember one time down in Mississippi a bunch of those rusty raggedy scoundrels of his made me run fifteen miles betwixt sun-up and sunset and

then when night time came on I felt refreshed enough to keep right on runnin' most of the night."

He paused, beaming expectantly. Whenever Cap'n Jere spoke of having run away from the enemy it was customary for some person to say in the tones of a well simulated surprise: "Why, Cap'n Jere, I didn't know you ever let those Rebels run you!" and then he would gurgle happily and reply: "Run, hey? Why Goddle Midey, son, there was times when if I'd 'a' had a feather in my hand I'd 'a' flew!" And then, as if acting on signal of drill, all within hearing would laugh heartily.

Members of the present company knew the procedure. They had been schooled in the routine of it—the opening statement by him, the question, the apt retort of the answer, then the rewarding outburst. It was one of Cap'n Jere's most reliable whimsies—a sprightly joke, indeed, but requiring cooperation to bring it out properly.

Having spoken the key line he waited, according to formula. He kept on waiting. For once, no volunteer came briskly in on the cue. A daunting little pause ensued. Two or three men straightened themselves free where they leaned against the front wall of the store and moved off, making rather an ostentatious show of their departure. Mr. Joel Biggs, head of the firm, started humming "There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight" with almost a theatrical air of absent-mindedness. Sundry others took up the thread of their conversation where Cap'n Jere had riven it. Somebody began snapping his elastic sleeve sup-



It was a good speech, as Congressman Gifford well knew. Never yet had it failed him.

porters with an impious little slapping sound. The snub might have been rehearsed beforehand, so perfectly was it acted out.

For a second time, from that same stage, Cap'n Jere made his exit, haughtily, but nevertheless greatly discomfited. He made it to the hateful music of a derisive chuckling and giggling behind him.

But pretty soon after that the Spaniards gave in, and in a little while more the handful of volunteers who had gone from Shawnee Run were mustered out and came back. None of them had been farther away from home than Tampa, Florida; there was but one who got that far. The rest had been detained at Chickamauga or Savannah. And so Cap'n Jere, still the only individual in Shawnee Run who ever had heard the whine of a hostile bullet in the hour of battle, was restored to a pedestal which ceased to totter and again became quite firm under his feet.

There this ancient stayed, assured and secure, while a newer generation and a less regardful one than his was growing up about

him. It was a season of transition. Even into remote communal backwaters such as Shawnee Run came changes—changes in mode of speech, in mode of action and thought. They didn't exactly creep in; they rode in with the dust of the first automobile; they dropped from the wings of the first passing Wright machine. But excepting that he went game in both legs, and took on a piping tone in his voice; excepting that his head now was snow-white where once it had been the color of rusty iron; and excepting that with passing time he grew a bit more prolix in conversation and a trifle more dictatorial in manner, the patriarch didn't materially change. Then, eight years ago at the other side of the world, there sprang up a thing which was to alter all lesser things on this particular atom of the planetary system.

It took a great war to make a civic institution of Cap'n Jere. It took a little war—a short horse of a war and soon carried—to jostle him on the perch of his neighbors' rearing. It took the greatest of all possible wars utterly to shake him down. Perhaps

for his intolerance he deserved overthrowal; perhaps, as the fellow says, he had it coming to him. Undeniably he was over-spoiled, vastly puffed up in his own image. Popular idols often suffer from such failings, to their ultimate undoing. Or perhaps it merely was that in his stubbornness and his conceit he set himself on the path of a mighty storm and the winds of it blew him flat, making shards of his senile vanities and broken potsherds of his pride.

You couldn't put your finger on a definite place and say that here, right here, was where the thing started. In such cases you rarely can do that. Who can make a chart for the beginnings of the formless thing we call public opinion? The point remains that, seemingly all at once, Captain Rudolph became a sort of town jibe. Let him come hobbling into a group and young Joel Biggs or somebody would say, lifting the voice slightly and with a studied air of casualness: "Well, I see by an article in last Sunday's supplement of the Chicago paper that there's already been more casualties in the Battle of Verdun than the entire list of killed, wounded and missing amounted to in this country from 1861 to 1865." Or young Eddie Boatwright, the rising notary public, would be moved to direct attention to the interesting fact that the total weight of metal fired from the Federal Army's guns in the three days of Gettysburg would have fed the artillery of the Allies for less than twenty minutes on any given day along the western front.

These little byplays had a way of taking place whenever Cap'n Jere dropped in; really, the thing amounted to a habit. Pretty soon he quit dropping in. He sat on his front porch and read "The Memoirs of U. S. Grant." There were long spells when he sat there, not reading but just staring at nothing at all.

Even in his absence he served to adorn a moral and point a comic tale. Utterances of his, made in the early stages of European hostilities before he withdrew from village club life—or its equivalent—were remembered and cherished and repeated with variations agreeable and suited to the moment. One utterance in particular was a favorite. It figured frequently in the extensive repertoire of that natural-born but now middle-aged cut-up, Banks Ferguson. Altering his heavier tones to a perfect simulation of the other's petulant quaver, he would speak after this fashion:

"What kind of a war is this one over in Yourupp as compared with My War? If you know so much, Mister Smarty, you tell me that? Now, mine was a war to save the Union. What does a war that's only affectin' the whole world amount to alongside of that? And squattin' down in a loblolly at the bottom of a trench and shootin' away at men two or three miles away where you can't even see 'em—what kind of a war is that to fight? And usin' airplanes and balloons and submarines and pizen gas and tanks and all sorts of new fangdangled contrapshuns—why, it's a machine-made war, that's what 'tis! Why, Goddle Midey, you might just as well ship a lot of self-cockin' post-hole diggers and automatic thrashin' machines up to the front to do your fightin' for you, and you stay at home and be comfortable. Now, you take My War: You stood right out in the open, man to man, where you could see the whites of the other feller's eyes as he come at you and the color of his insides when you let 'em out of him on the p'int of your bayonet. That was a real war, Amurikin ag'inst Amurikin, not a long distance affair, like the one these here furriners are carryin' on. Goddle Midey, no sirree bob!"

A good joke is a good joke and this one, being treasured and nursed along, lasted until our own country quit backing and filling and flung herself headlong into the mess on the side of right and decency. From then on for better than a year and a half people had something important to think of and to do. There were volunteer recruits to be patted on the back and cheered as they went away and promised that the whole wide world would be theirs, with the compliments of a generous and a grateful nation, when they came victoriously home again. There were draft boards to be organized. Mothers gave their boys, wives gave their husbands, children their fathers. Older men gave of their time and their enthusiasm.

And through it all, while this hot and burning fever of patriotism ran through our nation's veins, the veteran, by general consent as it were, remained in retirement. For him the times were out of joint; his nose, as the saying goes, was out of joint too—dislocated by spy and eager youngsters swelling about in khaki and just yearning to go for the throats of the Heines. They made a proper modern image of American valor; local sentiment enshrined them, collectively, in the niche that had been left vacant when Cap'n Jere crawled into his hole and pulled the hole after him.

He crawled in definitely and, as one might say, for keeps, the people of Shawnee Run, regardless of race, creed or politics, confederated together following the declaration of a state of war for a grand patriotic rally. The committee on arrangements in Lawyer Dave Lucas's office to map out the program and Reverend Ames suggested that Captain Rudolph and after the Honorable Oscar Tawney of Medlarsville be invited to address the meeting.

"Why those two?" asked Mr. Joel Biggs, Senior, sharply. "Yes, that's what I'd like to know—why them two?" echoed Banks Ferguson.

"Well," said the Reverend Ames, rather taken aback, "following a precedent, you know, to have Captain Rudolph speak at all public gatherings—it's grown to be sort of a tradition among us. And Mr. Tawney, having lately been elected county judge and being a man of ripened years and mature judgment might very well follow him, don't you think?"

"Or in other words," said Joel Biggs, Junior, "you'd have young speakers appear in order of senility, eh?" Joel, Junior, was lately returned from an eastern college where he had taken the full academic course and would shortly enter munitions work thereby getting himself exempted from the draft call. "Well, I'm against it—for one."

"You and me both, Joey," spoke up Banks Ferguson. "I'm in favor of leavin' old man Jere off the list altogether. He's got to be a regular nuisance and nothin' short of it. He'd spill the whole blow-out fur us. That's what he'd do—Goddle Midey all over the place—excuse me, Rev'rend, but that's the fact—and talkin' about what he done at the Battle of Shiloh till everybody was plum wore out. We don't want to hear no more about the late war; we want to hear somethin' about the present one. And we don't need no imported spielers neither, the way I look at it. This is goin' to be strictly a Shawnee Run affair, and that the general idea? All right, then, let's confine ourselves to local talent and cut out all the old fossil-backs that're playin' hookey from the graveyard on borrowed time. It's a young man's war; let's hear from the young men then. I nominate Joel Biggs, Junior, for chairman of the meeting and Eddie Boatwright to make the principal talk. Eddie's well read and a hustler and he knows how to make it snappy."

As it turned out, Eddie Boatwright did make it snappy. He had the gift of the apt word and the whiplash metaphor. His development into a seasoned orator dated from this auspicious début. He became the best four-minute speaker in the county and was sent all over the State, rousing the people and leaving complimentary pieces printed about him in the papers. So quite naturally and as a matter of course he was chosen to make the address of welcome when Mort Overstreet come back from France in November of 1918, stepping stiffly on a compound leg which creaked slightly in the hinges when Mort put his weight down on it. The old Captain wasn't on hand when this great event took place, either. He wouldn't have fitted into it probably. At any rate he stayed in the hole of his own digging that had been pulled in behind him, getting older and feebler by the hour, and without a contest, and by common consent, the inviolable Overstreet took over the honors and the duties of being Shawnee Run's official hero in succession of Captain Jere Rudolph, removed.

The incumbent had no youthful rivals, either. Shawnee Run's military contingent had been remarkably lucky and dependent upon one's point of view in such matters, remarkably unlucky. Of her quota for war service only a few had actually gone overseas and a fewer number still had seen the front lines. There were but two Gold Star mothers in town when the fighting ended and in both instances their boys had died of disease in cantonment on this side of the salt water.

The one exception to the rule of immunity from physical blemishment was this spindly youth, Mort Overstreet. It seemed that while he lay ailing one night in April, in a hospital near a French place referred to by him as the town of Bandy Duck, a German airman had sprinkled the area with bombs and he, huddled and shriveling under his blankets, had been one of the victims. So now he was back home again, most honorably maimed, with a wound stripe on his sleeve, and on his left breast one of those French Crow de Gears. Here, by grannies, was a hometown boy who'd been decorated by the French government for meritorious conduct and fortitude under suffering, and kissed on both his cheeks by one of their biggest generals! Shawnee Run, from Mr. Joel Biggs, Senior, her richest citizen, to the smallest small boy trailing Mort in dumb adoration, felt that about owed him homage and bestowed it freely.

Howsomever, when the first glamorous sheen of his home

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"All set, Daddy?" said young Mort. "Well, then, let's go."

coming wore off, it was not to be denied that the new idol proved somewhat of a general disappointment. The trouble with him seemed to be that except for his limp he was exactly the same gangling Mort Overstreet who had gone away in the spring of 1917—the same slow talking, slow moving, spraddle-armed

young person. Discipline had not made him smart or alert; it had not made him tidy of dress. If anything, he seemed more slouchy and more indolent than he had been before he went for a soldier—and that was saying a good deal.

Anyhow, the war was over now—Germany had thrown up both

hands and quit—and people were getting normal again. With normality came calmness. If war is glory gone on a drunk, surely the first six months of peace is the next morning after the jag. Now Shawnee Run, in common with the rest of the country, had for many months been swallowing sublimated enthusiasm in great gulps. The need for taking the medicine having passed, her communal stomach naturally turned slightly sour. Don't set her down as being in any temperamental respect different from the rest of the country. You will recall how, when the first of our combat divisions returned from foreign service, New York went wild over the victorious legions as they marched through Fifth Avenue beneath triumphal arches. But here just the other day, when some stray remnants of the A. E. F. landed, after doing garrison duty for so long in Germany, the lone policeman who met them as they filed off the transport was in doubt whether he should run them in for having no visible means of support or for parading through a public thoroughfare without a permit. He couldn't arrest them for causing a crowd to collect, because they didn't cause any crowd to collect. And Shawnee Run is merely New York City as prescribed by a homeopath.

Be all this as it may, the point I am trying to get at is that public opinion in its reactions toward one-legged Mort Overstreet presently showed decided and chilling modifications. Perhaps I can best sum it up in the progressive stages of its cooling-off by quoting here three representative citizens, speaking separately and on succeeding occasions. First, we have Mr. Banks Ferguson, addressing a sympathetic group of listeners some two months after the close of hostilities:

"Say, takin' him by and large, ain't he turned out to be about the dumbest imitation of a conquerin' hero ever you seen in your life? Here the Ladies' Aid goes and gets up a congratulation party at the Methodist church specially on his account. He's to be the center of attraction, with everybody shakin' hands with him and Presidin' Elder Burris all organized to make a complimentary speech about him right to his face. And what does he do? Smack in the middle of things he ups and disappears and later on we find out that he's sneaked away and gone on home and went to bed. Says he's gittin' tired of bein' fussed over; says if anybody's interested in his case they might spend a little time findin' out why his back pay is bein' held up on him. That's gratitude for you—ain't it? And try to git him to tell you somethin' about the war or how a battle looked or the way one of them big shells sounded when it went off close to you—just try, that's all. He'll start in with a pack of tiresome drivel about the cooties, or about how they don't measure distance over there by miles the way civilized people do but by killymeeters, whatever they are. Or else he'll talk about the mud—just mud, mud, mud. He's got mud on the brain. Seems like, to hear him tell it, he didn't see nothin' over there for months on a stretch except mud and killymeeters. Well, these here killymeeters may a-been more or less of a novelty, but who wants to hear about all them different grades of foreign mud when we've got a mighty superior domestic brand right here at home? You take that piece of Main Street up toward the bridge on a soft March day followin' after a hard winter and I'll back her for mud ag'in the world . . . Honest, Mort Overstreet gits me plum' outdone with him sometimes, the way he acts. I only hope next time we have a war there'll be somebody goin' from here who'll have noodle enough to furnish a few of the real details for local consumption when he gits back."

Imagine the lapse of six months more and hearken to Mr. David Lucas, attorney at law, also real estate and loans, farm mortgages a specialty. This is Mr. Lucas speaking:

"Well, sir, he was in here again yesterday wanting to know why that mix-up about his disability allowance hadn't been straightened out yet up at Washington. That makes the third time in less than a month he's come to my office or else waylaid me on the street to pester me about that blamed claim of his. Didn't I take his case as an act of charity? Didn't I write to my close friend Jake Hargis asking him to give the matter his personal interest? Didn't I get a letter back from his secretary, practically by return mail, saying that just as soon as suitable opportunity offered the secretary would bring the matter to Congressman Hargis's attention? Didn't I turn that letter over to Overstreet? Don't he know that the government is still all snarled up over all these new problems? Hasn't he got any consideration, any patience? Don't he know—

"But oh shucks, what's the use! Where does he get off anyhow, to be bleating around like that? Why, he didn't even get hurt in action. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether he ever saw any real action. And yet he had doctoring and free nursing, the best of care from the government . . .

"Say, some of these returned veterans of ours give me anyway. They're getting their vocational training and allotments of reclaimed waste lands, or anyhow they will 'em in due course of time when the government gets round to those details. And while they're waiting why, in the name of that's holy, don't they go to looking for jobs instead of loafin' about, actin' like they thought the country owed 'em a free living for the rest of their natural lives? . . . How's that, Tobe?—hard for a crippled boy to get a job, you say? Well, so far as I recall, Mort Overstreet never exactly lost his eyesight looking for a job of work while he still had both his legs." (Applause.)

Thirdly, let us overhear what the senior Mr. Biggs, head of the firm of Biggs & Son, successors to the old established concern of Biggs & McKenna, and Shawnee Run's most affluent and influential citizen, has to say. What he says will be worth pondering over, for it is the Voice of Business that speaks through him and Business, we must admit, has had just cause for grievance and resentment in these distressing post-war days:

"And now it's to be a bonus act, eh? Well, I'm flat against it. You men can tell anybody you please that I'm flat against it. That's exactly what I told this young cripple, Overstreet, no longer ago than this morning right in this store. We're being eaten up with taxes as it is. And now, on top of all the rest, it seems we're going to be called on to pay a few billions for a bonus. What I want to know is, did this bunch fight for their country through patriotic motives or did they fight for money through mercenary motives? Nobody seems to appreciate that those who stayed at home did their share, too, and carried the burden and footed the costs. Why, my back is broke right now from paying for the load of Liberty Bonds and Victory Bonds that I've got over there in my safe. I could get big interest on the money if it wasn't all tied up in government securities. But you don't hear me kicking. Only, I must say this: Just let Congress try to shove us into the next fool war that comes along and then you'll see whether the business men of this country will rally like they did this last time!"

This brings us up to Decoration Day, last past. Most years Decoration Day had not meant a very great deal to Shawnee Run. The banks and the stores closed; some families went picknicking and some heads of families went fishing. Those who visited the neglected and treeless burying ground, a mile and half from town, did so as individuals and not under organized auspices.

This year, though, Shawnee Run was signally favored by the high gods of coincidence. The Honorable Gilbert J. Gifford, that distinguished Representative from a far-away district, who, half a century before, had conferred an everlasting honor upon the town by being born in it, had returned upon business connected with the settling up of a distant kinsman's estate. He was an orator of parts—of about all the oratorical parts there are; the walls of the halls of Congress might so attest. As they say in the argot of the ball field, he had everything—speed, control, change of pace, a hot fast one, a slow curve. And in his own appreciative ears the sound of his voice, uplifted in rhythmic elocution, was the sweetest music ever crooned. Being waited upon by a delegation, he graciously agreed to deliver an oration on the thirtieth in commemoration of his country's defenders, both the quick and the dead.

The occasion justified elaboration. By subscription a fund was raised—the Biggises, father and son, heading it with substantial donations—to meet all special and extraordinary expenses. One of the Medlarsville brass bands—not the best one but the other one—was engaged. A parade by automobile and carriage to the cemetery was ordered; the journey if made afoot was a considerable one, especially when the weather was warm. And it usually is warm on the edge of the Corn Belt when spring is melting into summer.

Decoration Day morning came in hot and humid, with clear skies but with the lurking threat of an abrupt change of weather in the moist stickiness of its air. Because the second-best Medlarsville band had to take part in a forenoon parade at home and so could not drive across country from the county seat until after that job was finished, the formal exercises in Shawnee Run were to begin at two P. M.

The parade was to start sharp on the hour. Those in charge—the grand marshal and his aides—were determined it should move promptly, and worked valiantly to that end; so it got under way shortly after three o'clock, the band leading. In the first car following it, holding thus the prime place of distinction—a car with the top turned back—rode Congressman Gifford with Mr. Lucas, Mr. Boatwright and the Messrs. Biggs. The next car bore Shawnee Run's two Gold Star mothers and the pastors of the three local churches. (Continued on page 112)

By RITA WEIMAN

*A Story of the
Rarest
Person
on
Broadway*



Upstage

Illustrations by Harrison Fisher

"AND I said to him: 'My deah boy, don't talk to me as if I were your wife! And don't imagine you're the only Twin Six in town!' And we settled it right then and there!" The full, pouting baby lips broadened into a reminiscent smile. The pink and white cheeks dimpled. Miss Mariette Mallard, accent on the last syllable, laid her trump card on the table for the benefit of her listener, whose black eyes sparkled with gratifying interest. "And then he went out and bought me a big—"

Just what the "big" was remained a question, for Miss Mariette halted as a girl slid into the chair next to hers and stretched out a hand to dust a film of powder from the face of her mirror. They formed a queer assortment, those mirrors, all shapes and sizes, propped against both sides of the rack that ran down the center of the long make-up table.

Into them gazed as many types as there are flowers of the

field, with just two traits in common—all were slender as birch trees, all young as Eve before the serpent appeared. Except that to most the apple was no longer forbidden fruit.

At the moment there were some sixteen in various stages of the costume, largely imagination, which the prettiest chorus on Broadway wore in Scene I of "Good Night Cap." It was one of those musical mélanges commonly known as girlie shows, and advertised in red splashes of poster as "A Bevy of Beauties All under Twenty." The bloods of New York patronized the Summer Garden with a loyalty that brought them back at least once a week. It was the one theater in town in which the chorus fraternized with the audience, tripping down a runway into the aisles to trill their syncopated love ditties into the ears of selected members; or swinging overhead on ropes of roses, bare knees perilously near bald heads.

On the night in question, one of early March, Miss Mariette

Mallard's voluminous moleskin wrap was draped over the back of her chair and she pulled it round her with a pretty baby shiver as she scanned the girl who had just come in.

"Well," she observed, forgetting to go on with her story, "how is mamma's sparkler tonight?"

The girl bit her lip, then turned with a grin that was not in her eyes and flashed under Miss Mariette's little nose the hand that had dusted the mirror. On its third finger blinked a diamond, the size and brilliance of which was breath taking.

Miss Mariette promptly turned her attention to the black-eyed one. "Gracie deah, suppose you had a block of ice like that—wouldn't you try to make your clothes live up to it?"

The black-eyed one giggled. "And I wouldn't be so upstage about it until I did!"

The object of their amusement set her teeth and turned back to the mirror, addressing the reflection: "I pay cash for my clothes. That's more than some people can say."

The black-eyed one giggled again. "They look it," she murmured sweetly.

Miss Mariette indulged in a smile still more saccharine. "They look as if you paid nothing for them, my deah. Take my advice and pay cash to get rid of them." She gave a dismissing flourish of her small hand and patted her pale blonde ringlets.

The chorus girl of today buys her hats on Fifth Avenue and borrows her manner from the same thoroughfare. She never forgets that a lead awaits her if she's clever enough to look and act the part. Not that Miss Mallard had any ambitions in that direction. But she did try to live up to the moleskin cloak and the car that called for her every night. Only at unguarded moments did Second Avenue scratch through Fifth.

"You don't know how to manage him, my deah," she concluded, baby blue eyes fastened on the radiant stone.

The girl's lips opened, then shut tight. She had told them where the ring came from—and they didn't believe her. Besides, if she tried to answer them she'd cry, and she'd die rather than let them see her do that! It was the same struggle she went through every night and two matinées a week, sometimes with bravado, more often in choking silence. They made her ashamed, those two, that for her the apple still hung high on the tree. If they wanted to think some man had given her the diamond, so much the better! It would make her seem popular and less a little fool.

She downed the tears by vigorous motion . . . She sprang up—a kick of her heel sent her chair spinning—and ripping open the clasps of her one piece serge dress, she tossed it on the hook in the wall where hung a plain brown ulster and imitation seal turban—alley cat caught in the rain, Miss Mariette had christened it. Then she gritted her teeth, pulled the chair back into place and slashed on make-up.

Sallie MacMahon, listed in chorus annals as Zara May, was one of those who merited the splashing announcement of the red posters. Her long mermaid hair, with its glisten of sunset on the sea; the same gold in the lashes that shaded her deep blue eyes; the transparent quality of her skin with the swift play of young blood under the surface gave to Sallie's beauty a luminous quality Sallie herself did not possess. Sallie was just a girl, with a facility for doing what she was told. The daughter of a Scotch father with somber eyes and an Irish mother with laughing ones, both of whom had sailed the misty river into unknown lands after a stormy sojourn together in this one, she had been left at fifteen to take care of herself, with a love of the beautiful on one hand warring against a sense of economy on the other.

Sallie loved soft furs and clinging silks such as swept into the chorus dressing room nightly, but she had no desire to follow the tortuous path by which such luxuries are achieved. However, the fact that the Mallard girl and Grace assumed she had done so, did not at all disturb her. It was their ridicule she feared, their jibes at her clothes. Speeding across the stone floor under the Summer Garden stage, she tried to bring a smile to her lips. They merely quivered.

There came the march of a military air and the girls filed up the wobbly wooden steps and through a trap door. Sallie brought the smile to her lips, fixed it as if it had been glued there. Her young elastic body rippled through the number under the changing lights. She loved the jazz, loved the stir of rhythm, and had it not been for the ache in her heart whenever she set foot in the theater, she would have loved the work. She was nineteen. Music was in her blood.

She danced through the varying scenes with swift changes of costume, hurried dabs of powder and little time to nurse her woes.

A number toward the end of Act II was her favorite. It was the one in which the girls trooped down the runway and trilled to some not always embarrassed male occupant of an aisle seat:

"Oh-oh-oh-oh-h-h-h—
Won't you—smile at me?"

Often as she swayed through it, it never failed to give her a thrill. Likewise she never failed to get what she demanded.

Tonight as she syncopeated down the aisle a light shone from her deep eyes. Kindled by the smoldering defiance of earlier evening, it was utterly unconscious of seeking an object. But the gentleman in the particular aisle seat that was her territory could scarcely have been expected to know that. To him it constituted challenge.

"Oh-oh-oh-oh-h-h-h—
Won't you—smile at me?"

urged Sallie.

The man's lips parted. "You just bet I will!" came in a flash of white teeth.

Sallie's mind was not photographic. It registered no definite impression of the individuals occupying her particular aisle seat. They came and went, vague as shadows. But this man's response and his quick flashing smile with its personal note made her suddenly realize that she had been singing to the same smile every night that week. She wondered about him all through the performance. She was still wondering as Miss Mariette stepped into a short-waisted chiffon dress and pulling it over slender hips slipped her arms through the spangled shoulder straps. She and Grace were going to a party, and the latter emerged like a full blown rose, black eyes dancing above a gown of American Beauty satin. Then both sat down and took some of the make-up off their faces.

Sallie was in the act of pinning on the alley cat.

"Do show him to us, my deah!" persiflaged Miss Mallard. "Don't be so—er—close, even if he is."

Sallie jabbed the pin into her head, winced in pain and, with chin trembling and eyes closing on hot tears, hurried into the corridor, followed by the familiar titter. Blindly she made her way up the stairs to the stage entrance.

Outside a blaze of darting lights proclaimed that Broadway was rubbing the sleep from her eyes and preparing to dance. As she stepped into the glare, Sallie brushed a hand across her eyes. Lined up at the curb was a row of taxis. The modern stage door Johnny no longer stands bouquet in hand. He remains discreetly in his cab or car, and only when the lady of his choice emerges does he do likewise.

As Sallie moved toward the curb someone called "Good evening"—but that being a familiar method of address, she passed on without a glance.

"I say," pleaded the voice, "won't you smile at me again?"

Sallie turned then. Descending from a big yellow car which, had she known more of auto aristocracy, would have stamped itself as of prohibitive peerage, was the man of the aisle seat.

"Wait, please!" he begged and his teeth gleamed as they had in the theater. They were nice teeth in a boyish mouth, and upon Sallie they had a disarming effect. In spite of an instinctive impulse to run, she hesitated. The talon scratches inflicted in the chorus dressing room were still bleeding and the smile of the man who had ceased to be a shadow was balm.

He reached her, lifted his hat.

"Come for a ride, won't you?" he asked.

"Oh, I couldn't!" she answered promptly.

"Why not?"

"I—I just couldn't, that's all."

He gave her a curious, somewhat puzzled look. "Round the park—once?"

"I—I—no, thank you, I couldn't."

"Then let me drive you home."

"I—I don't live very far. I always walk it."

"Well, ride it tonight. Please!" Again that disarming gleam.

Sallie looked up with eyes clouded and a tremor on her lips. "It's nice of you to want to take me, but—"

"But I've been coming here every night this week trying to make you see me. And until tonight you never even knew I was alive. Don't you think you ought to be a little kind to a fellow who's as devoted as that?"

Sallie looked down, tracing a pattern with the toe of her boot. "Please—I—thanks just the same," she brought out finally. She took a step toward the curb, away from him.

And just then came one of those feathery gusts that send

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Impudent black eyes gazed critically at a certain framed likeness.

whirling the wheel of fate. Miss Mariette Mallard and Grace issued from the stage door, their exchange of glances telling too plainly that they were still enjoying the laugh at her expense. At the curb waited a limousine quite overshadowed by the gorgeousness of the big yellow touring car. They drew near, still giggling.

Swift as a bird, Sallie veered back to him. Instantly the man was at her side.

"You can take me home"—it was breathless—"I'll let you do that!"

He helped her in. With the sweetest of smiles she turned,

inclining her head in the direction of the two girls. As the car sped round the corner, they halted abruptly and, like Lot's wife, stood rooted where they stopped.

II

To a woman, the discovery that events do not work out as planned comes in the nature of a disappointment. To a man, the same discovery adds zest to the determination to make them do so. The man in the yellow touring car was amazed to find that Sallie actually did permit him to drive her home and no



Jimmie had been forced to content himself with flowers and kid gloves and perfume.

farther. He had anticipated that run round the park at least once—probably twice—possibly three times. He had even anticipated a cozy supper at which, across a table not too wide, he could drink deep of a pair of well-like blue eyes shaded with gold. But Sallie gave him her address, ten blocks from the theater, and though he urged with all the masculine dominance of which he was capable, she made him halt in front of a brownstone house sagging as if with the weight of its own years.

The man looked up the steep steps to where a flicker of gaslight sifted on to the broken mosaics of the vestibule.

"Is this where you live?" he queried, still holding the hand by which he had helped her.

Sallie nodded, adding as she tried to withdraw the hand, "Thanks ever so much."

"Here—just a minute!" He drew her back. "You haven't told me your name yet!"

"Zara May."

"On the level name, I mean."

"Oh"—she flashed him a smile—"that one's good enough."

"Peaches and cream would fit better," came in quick response. She jerked her hand away. "Good night, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Patterson. Jimmie Fowler Patterson. You'll notice I'm not so stingy as somebody else!"

She caught hold of the rusty iron railing. He sprang into the car. "Well, I can wait! See you tomorrow, Miss Zara May."

Two emotions played havoc with her dreams that night—exultation over the girls and fear. As through her narrow rear window she watched the patch of dull blue mellow into dull gray, she assured herself that tomorrow she would do

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nothing more than walk past the yellow car with a pleasant "Good evening."

But of course she didn't. Not tomorrow—nor any other night that found it waiting at the stage entrance. And that became every night.

In the chorus dressing room an aura of new interest surrounded her. That car commanded respect. The impudent black eyes of Grace began to gaze critically at a certain framed likeness she had hitherto displayed with pride. His car wasn't a marker to the one that called for Sallie. Miss Mariette even restrained her inclination to persiflage until one evening some ten days later when Sallie came in after the final act and caught her hunched on the floor, back up, meowing with all her might while the alley cat reposed over one ear.

All the old wounds tore open. The blood gushed to Sallie's head. She grabbed the hat and slapped Miss Mariette's face, leaving the latter too startled to retaliate in kind. And when Mr. Patterson begged her as he did each evening to drive out to supper, she stepped into the car, throat too full for speech.

He gave a broad grin. "Shall we make it up the Drive and back to Rector's?"

"I'd just rather ride if you don't mind."

They spun up Broadway, through Seventy-second Street and into the enveloping shadows of Riverside. The moon was up, a new crescent streaking its modest trail across the water. On the opposite shore the chain of lights was a necklace of clustering jewels laid on the plush of night.

Sallie nestled into the deep leather-cushioned seat, somewhat to the far side. A sharp wind lifted the curls from under the despised turban and sent them flying across the man's face. He stole a moment to turn and gaze.

"You're a winner!" he murmured.

Sallie scarcely heard him. She was lost in the intoxication of speeding motor and racing March wind. Never had she experienced anything like it. Gradually its turmoil soothed her own. She closed her eyes.

When they opened, it was to meet a swift turn of road, the houses mounted to a higher level and before them, far into the star-eyed night, a stretch of wooded walk, through which the Hudson shimmered.

"What's this?" she asked, hand grasping his coat sleeve as if to stop the onward rush.

"Lafayette Boulevard. You've been up here, haven't you?"

"No."

He slowed down, eyes mocking.

"Honestly! I've never even heard of it."

"Good Lord!" he whistled and stared at her. "How long have you been in the show business?"

"About a year."

"Well, what have you been doing all that time?"

"Working, most of it."

"But after working hours?"

"Oh, home right after the show. I'm pretty tired then."

He gave another low whistle, still regarding her curiously, that puzzled, half skeptical expression creeping into his eyes.

"And Sundays?"

"I visit the girls I used to work with."

"Where?"

"You mean where did I work?"

He nodded, still with that curious measuring of her.

"In Brooklyn—in a department store. I was at the perfumery. And one day Miss Barton, Bessie Barton—ever hear of her?"

"Rather! Peach of a voice—in 'Kiss Me Again.'"

"Yes. She was playing over there last year and she came in to buy some French extract—it's awfully expensive—"

"I know."

"I waited on her. And after she'd bought a big bottle—it was eight-eighths an ounce—she asked me if I'd ever wanted to go on the stage. She said I was——" Sallie paused.

"Go on," he put in quickly. "A beauty who didn't belong behind a counter."

"How did you know?" came wonderingly.

"I don't need blinders to make me see straight," he remarked succinctly.

"Well you—you're right—that's what she did say—and told me she'd have her manager put me on if I wanted it. So I went with them—twenty-five a week. It was a lot more than I was getting at the store. And when she closed, they took me on at the Summer Garden."

"And you still go round with the Brooklyn crowd?"

Some note in his voice put her on the defensive.

"They're my old friends—why shouldn't I?"

He stared at her again. "Queer!" he remarked to himself.

They dashed up a hill.

"I guess we'd better be going back," she sighed regretfully.

"What's the matter? Don't you like it?"

"It—it's wonderful!" Luxuriously she nestled down, eyes half closing again.

"Then have a heart! I've been jitting you from the theater for two solid weeks! Be a little sympathetic, won't you?"

She laughed, a ringing laugh free as the March wind. "You must think I'm an awful grafter."

"I think you're a sweetness."

The laugh died down. "I guess we'd better be going back."

They swung round. "All right. But we'll stop at Arrowhead first."

"What's Arrowhead?"

Once more that swift quizzical look, then his head went back with a long chuckle. "By George, you are cute!"

"What's so funny about my asking?"

"It's called Arrowhead Inn, sweetness—and we're going there for supper."

"Oh!"

"Now I guess you think you're not hungry?"

"No—I am hungry."

Her prompt and unexpected reply pleased him hugely.

"Right! There you are!"

They were flying up a drive, round a grassplot and under a porte-cochère. Sallie saw a house girdled with glass that glowed, warm and alluring.

She went into the hall while her host parked the car. A mirror on the wall reflected a face very different from the one she saw habitually in the jagged glass of the dressing table or the mottled one above her washstand. Its eyes were glistening, red lips were laughing, and at one corner a dimple danced. The blood surged underneath the smooth skin and went singing through every vein.

Mr. James Fowler Patterson refused the first table offered, selecting one close against the window with an intimate little lamp shedding its blush over the cloth. (Continued on page 100)



"My deah—what has become of the orange motah?" said Mariette

ARTHUR TRAIN

*lets light into the closets where
Society hides its SKELETONS
in his new Novel*



The Setting

of the story is the New York of 1921-22 and the principal persons of the story are:

PETER B. KAYNE, "The Pirate," a delightful old rascal who, having ruthlessly amassed a fortune, has retired to Fifth Avenue and respectability.

RUFUS, his son, President of the Utopia Trust Company, a conservative social light who is beginning to be vaguely discontented with his smugly successful existence.

ELIZABETH, RUFUS's wife, a fat and short-winded social climber who doesn't at all understand her children.

DIANA, the eldest daughter—brilliant, popular, exotically beautiful, daring, straightforward, inclined to be cynical.

CLAUDIA, LADY HARROWDALE, the second daughter, who during the war made an ill chosen match with a scoundrelly English nobleman and has been repenting at leisure in England.

SHEILA, the youngest daughter, at present in the flapper stage.

VINCENT PEPPERILL, Kayne's crotchety old lawyer.

LLOYD MAITLAND, a young attorney in Pepperill's office, a hero of the war, attractive, courageous, possessed of keen judgment and sound ideals.

LAWRENCE DEVEREAUX, a wealthy and likable young sportsman who is in love with Diana.

NIGEL CRAIG, also a war hero, an Englishman who has been living with Maitland on Irving Place, New York.

MERCEDES DELAVAL, a young dancer.

DOCTOR DAHL, a fake practitioner of oriental mysticism.

His Children's

Illustrations by

A Résumé of Parts One to Three:

WHEN Rufus, determined to get his daughter Claudia out of the clutches of her worthless English husband, consults Pepperill regarding a divorce for her, the old lawyer places the matter, along with all of Kayne's personal legal affairs, in the hands of Maitland. The latter, knowing that a divorce is impossible under English laws, suggests that Nigel Craig should kidnap Claudia and her children and bring them to America. Subsequently the details are worked out, a special ship is chartered, and Nigel leaves for Britain. At Rufus's house he discovers that the footman, Capper, was his old orderly in the trenches, both having been gassed together. Rufus has taken to Maitland at once and invites him to the coming out party of his daughter Sheila at the Elysée. Meantime Pepperill sardonically describes the Kaynes to his young partner as a smug, materialistic mid-Victorian family, rapidly going to seed, with three wild daughters—the wildest being Diana, who because of her unconventional actions is reputed "a wrong 'un."

At a week-end duck hunting party at his friend Devereaux's luxurious estate, Maitland unexpectedly meets Diana and sees



As Rufus entered Mr. Savoy's apartment he was as fluttered as a girl at her first dance.

Children

Charles D. Mitchell

her nonchalantly kissed by Devereaux. Against all his strait-laced Puritanical instincts Maitland falls intensely in love with her. While they are shooting ducks together he is overcome by an access of unreasonable jealousy and taunts her with being one of Devereaux's "feudal perquisites." In a flare of anger she is about to strike him when his penitent look stays her hand. He takes her in his arms and kisses her.

Shortly afterward Maitland and Diana—who has never been touched by real love but who is curiously attracted by this young lawyer's moral strength and integrity—meet at Sheila's party and the mutual liking is increased. As in many similar social events today, the Kaynes have delegated their responsibility as entertainers to a hired "social secretary," with the result that the party is somewhat "rough." In fact, things get to such a pass during the midnight supper that Maitland, abetted by Diana, unceremoniously puts out some of the rougher element. Sheila is effusively grateful and girlishly looks on Maitland as a hero . . .

Comes an interlude in the story describing the hectic past of old Peter B. Kayne, and telling how in middle age he suddenly "got religion" from a Salvation Army lassie during the days

when he lived on private cars with select parties of "ladies." Now, an octogenarian, he lives quietly in the top story of the Kayne mansion with his friend and retainer Billy McGaw; and the chief delight of the two is wandering in Central Park and making friends with nondescript kiddies . . .

One night Maitland goes to dinner at the Kaynes'. Diana as usual fails to appear, and Maitland subsequently meets her for a midnight dance with Devereaux and some others. Among the party is the petite Mercedes and the unctuous Doctor Dahl, whose fake oriental mysticism is quite the rage among certain neurotic women of high social standing.

As they are all about to enter the Elysée, Maitland is startled to see Sheila, who has been hitting a hard social pace, descending from a cab, heavily drugged. Diana and he take the girl home. After putting her to bed, Diana, shocked to the depths of her soul, watches the morning star rise and experiences in different terms something of the spiritual awakening that had visited old Peter B., her grandfather, years before.

Part Four: CHAPTER XIV RUFUS "GOES BAD"

DIANA, from her window on the fourth story of the Kaynes' house, saw the morning star slowly set behind the chimney pots of the city. It was as if the lamp to which she had likened it in her imagination had been gradually extinguished. A curtain seemed to have been drawn down across the heavens. A similar pall descended upon her spirit.

She threw herself upon her bed, trying to snatch a few moments of sleep, and when at last she succeeded in losing consciousness she saw Sheila, her eyes bandaged with a handkerchief, dancing straight towards the edge of a precipice at the foot of which she knew lay Claudia. She herself was somewhere about and she could hear herself saying: "Let her go! What difference does it make?" Then in some mysterious way Sheila disappeared and there was left only the handkerchief, which floated down—down—towards trees—infinite in number—grotesque—horrible yet "terribly funny"—that "meant absolutely nothing—absolutely nothing!" while Doctor Dhal stood on his head nearby and chanted glutinously: "Let her go! Let her go! Let her go!"

She awoke and found herself sitting up in bed, shivering. In the east a pale efflorescence made a background for the skyline. She recalled the last time she had seen the dawn. It had been down at Treasure Island in November in the blind at "The Tarn" with Lloyd. The thought of him now gave her courage; just as the sight of the star had given her hope. He had been right. He knew.

Even as she sat there staring out of the window the east grew brighter. Yes, the dawn was coming—a new day—an entirely new day! She ceased shivering and lay back upon her pillow. Peace took possession of her. When she came to herself the room was ablaze with sunlight.

She went downstairs to Sheila's room. The child was lying upon her back, half awake.

"Hello, Di!" she murmured drowsily. "You're up early." Diana kissed her and sat down upon the bed—something she had not done for years. Sheila gazed at her surprised.

A few words sufficed to show that she remembered nothing of the occurrences of the night before. Against the white pillow her face looked yellow—like that of a little old woman.

"Tell me," said Diana, "where did you get the drug you took last night?"

A look of terror came into the child's face.

"I—I didn't take any drug!" she answered in a thick voice.

"How can you say such a thing! It's horrid of you!"

Diana laid her cool hand on her sister's forehead.

"Where did you get it?" she repeated gently. "How long have you been taking it? Tell me the truth. I'm going to stand back of you and we'll fight this thing out together!"

She put her arms around the girl and laid her own head upon the pillow beside her. Sheila, starved for want of family affection, was melted. Sobbing, she pressed her face to her sister's.

"Oh, Di!" she moaned, clinging wildly to her. "Oh, Di! If only I'd had you before!"

"Never mind!" answered Diana. "You've got me now, and you'll always have me—as long as I live. I swear it!"

Gradually Diana possessed herself of the story. She couldn't stand the pace going out night after night. Sheila said, and had to take something to keep her up. At first she had tried to stimulate herself with tea and coffee, but this had given her headaches and made her sleepless. Some girls could come home from a dance and sleep right through until noon the next day. But she couldn't. As soon as it got light she woke up and couldn't go to sleep again at all.

So she had resorted, at the suggestion of a friend, to bromide. This had accomplished the purpose for a week or two but soon ceased to have any effect. A drug clerk had recommended "Kaufman's Anodyne" and she had tried that. But it was not enough. Almost ready to jump out of her skin with lack of sleep, bodily fatigue and nerves, she had experimented unsuccessfully with ether. That had brought her to cocaine. She had only taken it once—the night before.

"But where did you get the stuff?" demanded Diana.

Sheila turned away her head and compressed her lips.

"Don't make me tell you!" she begged. "It isn't fair! Please don't!"

"But you must tell me!" insisted Diana. "It isn't fair to the others if you don't!"

"Well, then, if I've got to tell," answered her sister, "Cecily Marcen's mother hired a woman to take Cecily out at night and wait for her—a sort of 'accommodating maid' you know—and she carries it round and sells it at dances. The girls buy it from her. She charges ten dollars for a dozen pills or she'll sell you a whole bottle for fifty. I got it from her—last evening in the dressing room at the Elysée. You say you want 'bicarbonate of soda.'"

Diana shuddered. What an escape—if it was an escape!

"But you won't tell anybody—father or mother—will you!" begged Sheila. "If you won't, I'll do anything you say—promise you anything!"

"What you need is to get yourself into decent physical condition," declared Diana as she rose to go, after making Sheila agree to take no medicine of any sort without a doctor's prescription. "You're in frightful shape! The first thing is to get thoroughly rested. I want you to stay in bed until after lunch today—sleep or no sleep, understand? And then go and take grandfather for a run in the motor. No dancing tonight. Bed at nine. And Old Doctor Di will call in again tomorrow morning. You'll be all right!"

"Oh, Diana!" cried Sheila giving her a hug. "You are a wonder! I'll do exactly as you say. Um-m!" She stretched. "I feel as if I were going to have a real holiday!"

Rufus Kayne breakfasted downstairs that morning—as he usually did when he had not been up too late—and when at about ten o'clock he descended his brownstone steps no one, not even Jarmon, would have suspected that he was anything but a contented man.

It is true that the night before the butler had clocked off five glasses of champagne, one of sherry and two of Madeira, in addition to the double cocktail he had privately served upstairs in the dressing room before dinner, but his master, in spite of a slight fustiness remotely prophetic of a headache to come, nevertheless appeared to him unusually fit. Accordingly Jarmon had taken the opportunity to inform him that he had been obliged to give the young footman notice for getting intoxicated. The miscreant was at that moment lying upstairs in his room in a drunken stupor and he was only waiting for him to come to himself to pack him off.

"Quite right, Jarmon," commended Rufus. "We can't have that sort of thing here. Get another man as soon as you can. Pay him whatever you have to."

Thus domestic justice took its course, for owing to having been gassed the footman had been unable to withstand the effect of the glass of champagne remaining in the last bottle which had been passed at the end of the dinner.

Champagne! It always gave him a headache, reflected Rufus. Why did he drink the stuff? Only because it was forbidden. Yet he had always been a moderate drinker, just as he had, from a strong natural preservative instinct, always been moderate in everything.

He had nothing to show for his self-restraint. He knew well enough what he would do if he had his chance over again! There was that boy Fannin of the Oriental Trust—divorced by his wife for living with a chorus girl—married again and still cheerfully doing business at the old stand. A coming man! And Wigton of the Aurora—and Newman of the Cottonseed National—both divorced and remarried. He mentally ran over the names of some twenty of the men active in financial affairs with whom he was most frequently thrown—thirteen were divorced, a fair proportion of them with considerable scandal. Yet nobody cared.

The Utopia Trust Company is a grand affair of marble and polished steel, mahogany and Kurdistan rugs, time-locks, old-young men and trim, discreet girls. One of these last arose from her desk in the glass partitioned anteroom outside his door as Rufus entered his office, picked up a red leather notebook and followed him in. It occurred to him that he had never before really appreciated Miss Dolan's figure. What was there about these women who earned their own living—did something? Why wasn't Elizabeth more like that? He noted the girl's alert carriage, the smoothness of her skin, the length of the dark fringes veiling her brown eyes. She was "all there"—alive, on her toes, speaking his language, responsive, ready to deliver the best of herself.

Miss Dolan replied to his greeting without looking at him. His mail was already opened and arranged for his inspection, but he did not examine it. Instead, his gaze continued to linger upon the graceful stenographer. A pippin! Earning two thousand a year and entirely dependent for her livelihood upon his fancy. His Christian slave! The slave opened the scarlet notebook and appeared to glance at the exposed page—a mere matter of form, as she knew all his engagements by heart.

"You have nothing until eleven-thirty when you have to meet Mr. Steiner and Mr. Savoy at Mr. Pepperill's office," said Miss Dolan in a detached voice. "But there is the regular board meeting at twelve-fifteen. Shall I take any letters now? Or will you go over your mail first?"

"Er—have I a luncheon engagement?" he stammered.

She shook her head. Meaning "no."

He wondered what she would do if he told her to write down: "One o'clock. Luncheon with Miss Dolan." For an instant

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Witnessing the scene between Claudia and Nigel, Hawker decided that if he couldn't have her himself the next best thing was to nail the fellow who did.

he was tempted to try it; then his common sense intervened. No—better keep his hands off the office. The town was full of women looking for trouble. Later, if he didn't find anything elsewhere, he could come back. She would be there—right on the payroll.

"Never mind," he muttered. "I'll read my mail, I guess."

His eyes lingered on hers for still another instant. As she turned away Miss Dolan smiled—ever so slightly, but enough.

He felt rejuvenated. He would take his time—look around. Eleven-thirty came before he knew it and he hurried across the street to Pepperill's office to find the others already there and waiting for him—the old lawyer rather impatiently, for he did not approve of the Trust Company launching out as it was doing, even technically within its charter powers.

The business in hand was a loan from the Utopia to Messrs. Steiner and Savoy in their capacity as moving picture producers, one of their many enterprises in the amusement field.

Steiner had an extraordinary way of inspiring confidence in people, largely because of his taciturnity. He rarely said anything, letting others say it for him, and was reputed to have made several fortunes. He was big, fish-faced, pop-eyed, imperturbable, and whenever a hippodrome, opera house, theater, casino or moving picture company went on the rocks he salvaged it, taking most of the stock.

Savoy, née Lefkowitz, now an individual theatrical producer, had made his first money as a speculator hawking tickets from Longacre Square doorways—but aided by a real flair for finance and a first-hand knowledge of "what the public wanted," he had pushed his way into the front rank of Broadway potentates in less than fifteen years, changed his name, married the most beautiful chorus girl seen on the Rialto in two generations, made a few millions, helped a Wall Street banker or so to make others, and in consequence had been taken up by society. He and his wife had been fêted and made much of, until by an extraordinary filip of fortune's penny, but with entire justice, they were on familiar terms with a set that Rufus himself would have given much to know.

Savoy was still a comparatively young man, sallow, smooth, insinuating, and Rufus, impressed by his ability and by his friendship with certain persons in high social places, had financed several business deals for him. Steiner and he were now about to amalgamate several moving picture concerns, and against Mr. Pepperill's protest, Rufus had orally agreed that the Trust Company should advance a million dollars to put the new corporation upon its feet, provided the notes should be secured by the individual endorsement of both promoters by a mortgage on the realty of the combining companies. The issue was to



Mercedes was so young, so trustful, so guileless—and she knew just when to place her hand impulsively on Rufus's knee.

CHARLES DEMUTH

consist of ten notes, each for one hundred thousand dollars the first payable May 1, 1922, and the others at intervals of three months.

The two promoters, Krabfleisch, their lawyer, and Maitland were waiting, but Rufus, being informed at the door that Mr. Pepperill would like to see him before the conference, stepped into the latter's office. The old lawyer, who had just finished going over the papers, looked up at his client over his glasses and remarked querulously:

"See here, Kayne, I don't know that I much fancy a trust company with which I am connected going into the moving picture business. Somehow it doesn't seem exactly like banking. You'll be manufacturing baby carriages next! Can't you call this thing off?"

Kayne shook his head.

"We've got to do something with our money. You know the condition of the railroads, and what European trade amounts to—there isn't any. Do you realize we've got over twenty millions surplus? What's the matter with baby carriages? Couldn't we make them under our charter? You drew it. You ought to know."

He was feeling rather bobbish. Mr. Pepperill observed this fact and scowled.

"Under your charter you could finance an expedition to colonize the North Pole! I saw to that—out of abundant caution. But that's not saying you had better do it. Who knows what's going to happen to this movie business? The bottom might drop out of it any minute."

"It's the third biggest industry in the United States," replied Kayne. "And the Alpha-Omega is a consolidation of several of the strongest companies. The loan is individually guaranteed by both Mr. Steiner and Mr. Savoy and secured by a first mortgage on all the property—valued at six millions."

"Six million fiddlesticks!" retorted the lawyer disgustedly. "A mortgage on a lot of hothouses! These fellows go through bankruptcy just as you might drink a cocktail. I don't like the crowd."

The banker shrugged his shoulders. He had heard the same line of argument many times.

"Well," he answered shortly, "I'm responsible. If we can do it under our charter powers we'll do it. Are the papers all right?"

Mr. Pepperill without replying collected his documents, arose and walked stiffly to the door where again he paused and faced Rufus.

"I want to say once more," he declared huskily, "that whatever its purely legal aspect may be I don't approve of this loan! It's not good business and if it becomes public it is bound to subject the Trust Company to unfavorable criticism. I mean this seriously."

Rufus was annoyed. He did not regard the propriety of the loan as any concern of Mr. Pepperill's.

"The loan is going to be made!" he retorted. "But if you feel that way I'll personally guarantee the notes myself. Nobody can criticize that!"

"That is only beating the devil around the stump!" answered the lawyer. "The loan is not a proper loan in my opinion."

"I'm sorry," replied Rufus dryly. "But my opinion, not yours, controls."

"As you please," said Mr. Pepperill and stalked out before his client.

The group in the conference room arose upon his entry.

"The papers seem to be correct," he remarked briefly. "Have you got the notes?"

Mr. Krabfleisch handed him a sheaf of oblong papers and Mr. Pepperill counted them and turned them over to Kayne who, having added his own name with a fountain pen to the endorsements upon each one, produced a certified check for a million dollars and gave it to Mr. Steiner. The latter gentleman, such transactions being, as it were, matters of ordinary occurrence with him, barely glanced at it and placed it in a thick wallet.

"Well!" he said after he had returned this casually to his inside pocket, "that's all, isn't it?"



The thought of
Lloyd now gave
her courage.
He had been
right. He knew.

Mr. Pepperill arose and went back to his office, while Maitland and Krabfleisch compared copies of the various documents.

"How about some lunch?" suggested Mr. Steiner to Kayne. "I can run you up to the Elysée in twenty minutes and we can talk more business maybe." He turned to his associate. "Better join us, Tad!"

There was to Rufus, the business man of stereotyped habits, something exhilarating and slightly surreptitious in abandoning his office and slipping off uptown to a gay restaurant in the middle of the working day; and this feeling was intensified not only by the size of Mr. Steiner's red paneled motor with its brocaded wall coverings and nodding artificial flowers, but by the averted faces of the traffic policemen at sight of its mysterious license number.

At the Elysée the atmosphere was one of studied vivacity and showy smartness, but to Rufus, after his evening with Mrs. Brice-Brewster and her supporting company, it had the dash and sparkle of a careless aristocracy at carnival. It was an auspicious beginning to his era of romance! (Continued on page 150)

By RUPERT H



"What's the meaning of such goings on?" demanded the old man in wrath.

The Lightning

to the road and along it to a comfortable, flower-enriched farmhouse. He clung to her arm at first because he was weak, but gradually because her arm was warm and it was sweet to be close at her side.

She felt the change in him from misery to stealthy delight, and she blushed. Yet she did not cast him off. Her mother was dead and she, as the eldest daughter, kept her father's house for him. She was used to the gropings of audacious men. The other children were in the fields with the father, and she made the stranger rest in a big rocking-chair on the porch while she brewed fresh coffee, browned toast for him. It was good coffee, perfect toast.

He told her that he was a New York farmer by birth but was now the purchasing agent for a wholesale house in India, and was on his way back there. He had been taken ill on the train and in a daze had stepped off when it stopped at a watering tank on the other side of the woods where she had found him.

Eglah may have guessed that he was not telling the exact truth, but he seemed too forlorn to have a vicious motive, and she was one of those who would feel only a greater pity for a soul in the miserable estate of needing to lie.

This man drew her more than any man had ever drawn her, because he was more helpless, more abject than any other man she had ever met.

Her schoolmates and the young farmers and villagers who courted her always tried to impress her with their prowess, their strength, their means. They promised her that they would make her happy and save her from trouble and toil.

Even Professor Brocklebank, whom she cared for more than any other man, had always tried to lift her to his plane or to some ideal plane that he imagined for her. He read to her his learned essays and his dabbings in criminology, but for her praise, not her counsel. They were beyond her criticism, of course; but she would have liked them—and him—better if she could have been something more than a stupid listener.

Her heart and her arms ached to lift, not to be lifted. And this newcomer fallen from the skies looked up to her, leaned on her, took bread and milk and strength from her hands. He seemed to be the career her big heart had ached for without knowing why it ached.

Trainor—he told her his name was Trainor, Conrad Trainor—lost little time in making love to her. He did not offer her wealth.

SHE heard a man sobbing aloud—a strange noise she had never heard before. She paused, her heart racing, her knees trembling.

She had taken the short cut home through the woods from the trolley line. She always hurried through because a tramp might be lurking in the thicket. Once, indeed, a wild man had called to her and advanced toward her.

She had run away from him. But she ran toward this man. Her darting glances found him where he had flung himself across an old log, and when she reached him she bent and touched his shoulder. He had not heard her approach, but in the touch of her soft hand there was such pity that, though he lifted a ghastly face, he was already almost prepared to find an angel bending above him.

Any human mien would have been beautified by such an inner illumination of sympathy, but this woman was not old or homely or ungraceful.

"You are suffering?" she murmured. "What has happened? Are you hurt?"

He turned and sat up, mumbling:

"I can't tell you. I have been in frightful pain—sick—sick!—terrible miserable! Please don't ask me. Please!"

She smiled with a saintly patience and said:

"You are suffering—that is enough. It's awful to see a big man so broken. I live near here. Let me take you to my home. You can rest there till you are better."

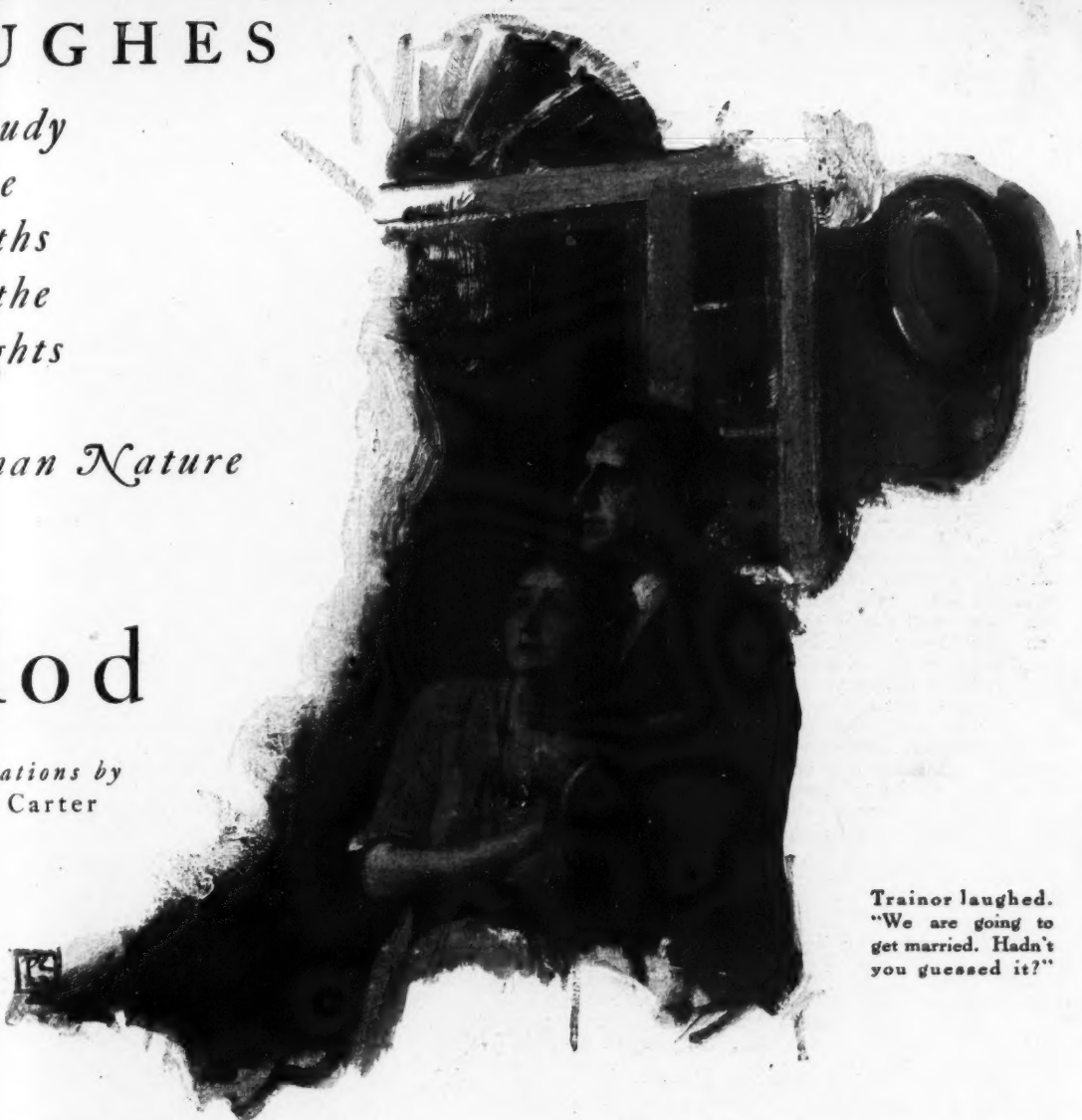
She helped him to rise, and he clung to her arm as they walked

RT HUGHES

*A Study
in the
Depths
and the
Heights
of
Human Nature*

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Illustrations by
Pruett Carter



Trainor laughed.
"We are going to
get married. Hada't
you guessed it?"

Her dower was to be his need of her. He simply told her that he didn't see how he could live without her. It seemed to him, he said, like as though he had been looking for her everywhere like a lost child seeks its mother. That word "mother" won her.

By the time her father and the children and the hired men came in from the fields she had their supper ready. Mr. Trainor had not offered to help her, but had flattered her by his helplessness. He was content to sit in a chair and watch her. And that filled her meek heart with its first pride. It made the drudgery a display of graces and gifts.

Her father was surprised to find a strange man in the house, but he misinterpreted the power of weakness and thought of the fellow as a sick hobo who would soon be on his way. The next day Eglah forgot to go to town to meet Professor Brocklebank as she had promised. The next day she had still to help her guest. Finally Brocklebank sent her a little note saying that he had finished his masterpiece and would like to come out and read it to her, unless she should happen to be coming in town.

She was driven to a bit of double dealing that gave her a sickening sense of duplicity. She told Trainor that she had some shopping to do in town. When he offered to go with her, she was rather awkward about the excuse of keeping him at home lest the journey tire him. She felt guilty and looked it. He could not conceal his suspicion and he had an evident struggle with anger. But he nodded and let her go. She promised to be home early and cut across the neck of woods to the trolley.

She found Professor Brocklebank at the high school. It was a Saturday afternoon and the only chaperon was the janitor—who was in a joking mood. He twitted Eglah with coming there to "spark the professor."

This threw her into a turmoil of anxieties. When the professor greeted her with his usual affection, he alarmed her. She was less subtle than usual in repressing him. She could see that she hurt him. She felt that she had no right to do that, seeing how nice she had always been to him and how she had half assumed that some day he would probably ask her to marry him and she would probably say yes.

But when she was impelled to make amends for her rebuff, she was restrained by the knowledge that her heart was now with Mr. Trainor. It was disloyal a little to be here at all. Yet she could not get away without a gross unkindness to her dear and admirable friend, the professor.

The solemn young schoolmaster intoning his majestic philosophies was so busy with pondering on her absent-mindedness that his own absent mind did not notice when he turned over two pages at once. And neither did his audience. And probably the editors he sent it to would be equally concerned about other things as they skimmed and skipped.

And that would be too bad, for Professor Brocklebank was a nice young man and his theories were exalted by that final mercy which only science knows.

II

ALONG toward the time when Eglah should have been taking the outbound trolley, she vaguely heard the professor's sonorous tones exclaiming:

"The greater the criminal and the more appalling his crime, the sorrier we should feel for him, the more carefully we should abstain from anger against him. We owe this as much to ourselves as to him, for, while an injustice or a cruelty is only an

injustice or a cruelty to the poor victim, it is soul damnation to the one who inflicts it!"

The young philosopher stole a hasty glance at Eglah to see if she were as impressed by his wisdom as he was by her beauty.

He felt a lack of attention in the very alertness with which she caught his eye and nodded and smiled her encouragement.

What was she thinking of? Her father's supper, probably. She was in a hurry to get out to the farm and set about her biscuits and fried potatoes! And immortal wisdoms must be considered by only half a mind.

Perhaps she would have paid more heed if she had known more of crime, of which she knew nothing at all.

Certainly she would have heeded if she could have foreseen that she was to encounter the most desperate and ruthless criminal of her generation, and to verify the professor's theories in her own life.

She did not start up with a cry even when he went on with thought-curdling statements of this sort:

"I have read a great deal about punishment, but I have never read where any good came of it. It eases the hearts of the punishers to take revenge, of course. But revenge as a state's business is an old-fashioned idea, and is respectable no longer.

"The idea of punishment for its moral effect still sticks, in spite of all the endless evidences that it has never had any moral effect except a bad one.

"In England they used to hang people for theft. There at Tyburn they would dangle the pickpockets—little boys and girls among them—on the gibbet for the multitude to see, and to regard as a warning. But did anybody learn a lesson? No, the living pickpockets were grateful for the crowds that gathered, and they plied their trade famously in the swinging shadows of their unlucky fellow craftsmen.

"When people were sent to the stake alive for nearly everything—for heresy and treason especially—even the servant girls and hoodlums were lured into theology and statecraft just to get themselves burned. Sensational punishment makes sensational crime interesting to twisted wits. Has the burning of negroes down South, or up North, put an end to their offense? No. It has dazzled crazy wretches to seek equal peril.

"Almost any cure would be justifiable that cured; but to torture men who are already tortured, and to fascinate others as the lamps draw the moths to pain, bewilderment and disaster—that is pure stupidity.

"What hideous things the best people have approved! things that the worst people now abhor, flogging soldiers and sailors, lashing the insane, thumb-screwing witnesses in court; digging up the dead and mutilating them and making human sacrifices to idols and creeds of cruelty.

"Mad people were once thrown into dungeons and reviled because they were supposed to be filled with devils. George the Third, the king we fought in our Revolution, went mad and was whipped by his servants and starved and cursed. As soon as a merciful physician came along and treated him kindly he got well again for a long while. Less than a hundred years ago they flogged a sick king in England!

"About the same time there was some excitement because it was learned that three little girls of nine had been kept in solitary cells in England for over a year. One just judge said they deserved it. Yet what worse cruelty did any degenerate moron ever inflict on little girls than the enlightened governments did a little while ago? And are doing now.

"A year in a dungeon could not better the souls of those poor children—yet we try by the same means to reform criminals who are only children. As the criminologist, George Ives, says: 'Punishing people to make them behave or to frighten other people into behaving is like trying to steer a ship from the outside; it can't be done.'

"Surely the time will come when men who offend, be it never so grievously, will not be put to death or buried alive in receiving vaults called jails. They will be treated with tenderness and pity. And the more wicked they have been, the sorrier people will feel for them."

Once more Professor Brocklebank lifted his eyes to see if his exquisite audience had not at least winced before the amazing courage and audacity of his pronouncements. She had winced, but it was because her eyes had dared to run to the clock and she had seen that the hour was late.

Sick at heart because of the ill success of his unusual, indirect and futile means of making love, he read gravely on to the end of his solemn madrigal:

"Nowadays we hear little of the struggles of mankind with devils. Neither the fiction nor the history of today mentions

the once so universal adventures of the soul among devils. Brimstone is no longer smelled. Fiends no longer whisper offers for souls and infernal contracts are no longer drawn up and recorded.

"The literature of today, the drama and the moving pictures and the newspapers reek with appeals to the unfailing founts of public pity for the victims of danger, for men, women and children who are confronted by misfortune, who are helpless before great storms, tidal waves, forest fires, earthquakes, mortgages, plagues, ravening beasts, ravening men—the approach of any seemingly irresistible and overwhelming menace.

"But what of the man who sees the storm, the fire, the cobra coming upon him, not as a threat from outside, but as a something rising in his own soul?

"The criminal is the first victim of life. The public knows only his failures, it never even guesses his victories, his prayers, his wrestles with his temptations and his disease. The criminal is the suffering host of the parasite that gradually devours him, as the scorpion's young fasten upon the mother's head and gnaw her to death.

"The lucid intervals are all the punishments that crime needs. They are so frightful that any official punishment is only a petty annoyance; unless, as often happens, it is a moral support, showing the criminal that he is no meaner than the rest of the people and that they are persecuting him out of pure cruelty.

"Let us take care then to avoid committing crime against criminals. Our laws are but a code of punishments for sick people whom we call wicked. Let us no longer potter with trifling modifications of the venerable evil, the official and national barbarity, but let us, in the words of the immortal bard, 'reform it altogether!'"

He finished his tirade with a sigh. It was his life work, his soul's dearest ideal. Yet his soul's dearest woman was untouched by it. He did not mind if it proved a little over her head. What fretted him was that it was over her heart.

"I think it's wonderful!" Eglah exclaimed, already on her feet before his voice had ceased to reverberate about the empty schoolroom.

"It's awfully wonderful!" she repeated, glancing up with the unmistakable glance that people steal at clocks and watches. "I'm sure it will make you famous and I'll talk to you about it—a lot—tomorrow. I've got to hurry home now!"

"Let me get a horse and buggy, Miss Dunbar, Miss Eglah, and drive you out to the farm," he pleaded.

"Not today," she protested. "Tomorrow. The trolley runs right near and it goes so much faster than those dear old livery horses. I have to get supper and there is a—we have company for supper. Good by. Thank you, oh so much!"

She was at the door. The door had closed on her. Neither of them could know how completely an invisible door was closing her from him.

She was unwittingly on her way to a test of his theories.

III

LOVE and the escape from love play havoc with time-tables. For the first time in months Eglah's father came in from the fields to find supper not ready.

Trainor said nothing, but he looked cross-examinations. After supper, on the porch, in the moonlight he questioned Eglah. She had had time to concoct a good story but she lacked the skill, so she told him the truth.

Instead of being angry he chuckled. She could not understand why. It never occurred to her that she had paid him the tribute of terror, and had revealed how much afraid she was of troubling him. He was canny enough to see how completely her heart was his. He questioned her about the professor's essay, and while she could hardly have been said to pass an examination on it, she gave Trainor some notion of the general argument. To her surprise and relief, he praised the professor as "knowing a thing or two," as having "stumbled on to something."

And yet when, a few nights later, the lonely professor drove out to the farm after supper and came up the walk with the step one uses when paying a call, Trainor refused to come out and meet him.

After Professor Brocklebank had talked old Dunbar and the rest of the family off to bed, he persisted in staying. Eglah did not know how to get rid of him. She knew that Trainor was listening from inside the parlor, but she had not mentioned his presence to Brocklebank, and she had to go through the agony of receiving a fervent proposal of marriage and of rejecting it within earshot of an unseen rival.

What made it harder was that, after the professor had, with

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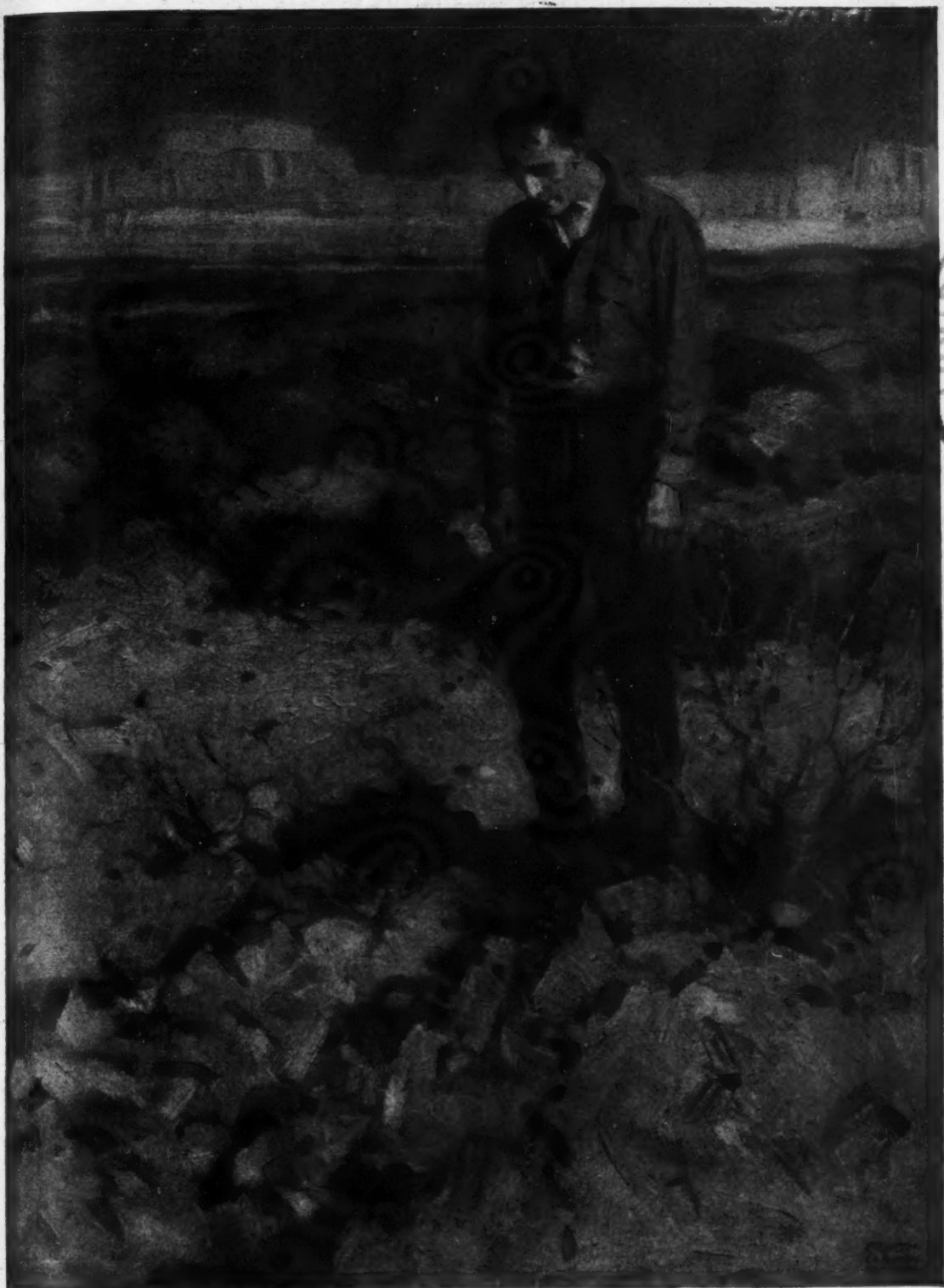
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"I buried her in the desert so deep that they won't never reach her."

unconscious condescension, offered Eglah his great and priceless love and had been dazed by her gentle refusal, his pride broke and he became panic-stricken at the thought of losing her. His pride, indeed, had been only a self-deceit, a protective coloration for his deep humility.

He worshiped Eglah and he dumbfounded her and himself by falling on his knees beside her rocking chair, gripping her as if he were drowning and imploring her not to abandon him to a life of despair.

Her pity, taken by surprise, gushed out to him and she had almost taken him in her arms to console him as if he were a disconsolate orphan when she heard a cough of menacing query. She broke free from the professor's clutch and fled inside the screen door, and through that mesh told him that she did not, could not love him, and begged him to go home.

As she watched him weaving drunkenly out to the gate she felt herself seized in the dark by constricting arms that drew

ST. LOUIS
READING ROOM

The Lightning Rod

her back into a suffocating embrace. She heard a low and sarcastic laugh that ended in a smothering kiss upon her bruised lips.

Her father appeared at the head of the stairs with a lamp held high, and seeing her in Trainor's clasp descended in a wrath that his nightgown and socks did not dignify.

Trainor could not release Eglah even before her father's glare, and the old man demanded:

"What's the meaning of such goings on?"

Trainor laughed:

"We are going to get married. Hadn't you guessed it?"

The old man was so knocked back that he gasped:

"Is that so, Eglah?"

"Yes, father."



"This," said the professor, "is Bluebeard Smith." The old man studied the portrait with fearful interest.

"Oh—well—all right! I suppose it's none of my business then."

And he retreated up the stairs, looking something like a rear view of the Statue of Liberty going back to her pedestal.

When Eglah's engagement was announced by the simple means of an "item" in the town paper, giving the date of her wedding, Professor Brocklebank felt humbled indeed. His morale was further shaken by the return of his manuscript from various magazines.

Then Eglah left town as Mrs. Trainor and Professor Brocklebank grew used to her absence, though his regret did not die.

IV

A YEAR or so after the light of Eglah was quenched in his life, the paper gave so much attention to a new crime king that even Professor Brocklebank began to take an interest in the amazing and increasing number of the man's marriages.

The papers called him "the modern Bluebeard" because of the remarkably high rate of mortality among his wives. He had been arrested while wearing the popular name of Smith, but new aliases were discovered as fast as new wives declared themselves or the relatives of perished women claimed kin with him and asked terrible questions.

Smith's extraordinary ability and willingness to marry an indefinitely serial wife struck the public as a trifle humorous. But the newspaper laughter stopped short when the prisoner slashed his throat across and hung over the edge of the grave, while the state's physicians tried to save his life long enough for the law to take it.

Smith's impulse to suicide had come from a sudden horror at a trick played on him by his hitherto incredible luck. He had known that the state where he was arrested had abolished capital punishment and had felt that his life, at least, was safe. When he learned that, only a few weeks before his arrest, the legislature had restored capital punishment, he felt so outraged that he attempted suicide.

It was this curious kink of ratiocination that interested Professor Brocklebank in him. It proved his theory that criminals were sick souls whose excesses were like the delirium of fever patients.

He was writing a special exposition of his views for the town papers when he chanced upon a portrait of the fatal polygamist. Smith's picture had been published broadcast in the city papers, but Professor Brocklebank did not read the city papers. He read the Baynesville Post, which supplemented its news with "boiler plate inside" material. He first saw Smith's portrait belatedly in these ready-made columns.

When he came out of a brief paralysis of horror, he ran to the trolley, rode out to the crossroads, dashed through the woods and found old Farmer Dunbar tilted back on his porch, reading the Post through big spectacles far down his long nose.

The old man looked out over his lenses as he heard the gate slam and his chair echoed the slam as it came down on all four legs. He stared at the frantic young professor with anxiety.

"What's wrong? Anybody dead?"

"Have you seen the Post?" Brocklebank panted.

"I'm readin' it naow."

"Have you seen this picture on page two?"

"Hahn't got that fur yit."

"Look! Who's this?" Brocklebank demanded, thrusting the paper under the old man's eyes. Dunbar started, shifted his spectacles, stared again

The professor implored Eglah not to abandon him to a life of despair.

and spoke with a certain pride in his relationship to one who had his picture in the paper.

"That's my son-in-law. He's in Indiar now with my daughter. What's he done to git his pitcher into the paper?"

"What hasn't he done? Have you read about Smith, Bluebeard Smith?"

"Yep."

"This is Bluebeard Smith."

The old man crumpled in his chair, turned for verification to his own paper, flapped it inside out frantically and read. He studied the portrait with fearful interest, began to tremble, to grope, bewildered, among the incredible connotations of the affair. He stammered:

"But what about my Eglar—if that's him? I don't see no mention of her amongst all these wives. What about my Eglar?"

"That's the question," Brocklebank groaned. He dropped to the steps and sat staring up at the frightened old man as he had often sat staring up at the pretty daughter whose ghost seemed to sway now in the empty rocking-chair which a cold evening breeze had set in motion.

V

NOTHING is more familiar in our daily news than murder, yet when the lightning strikes into any one life it comes always as something inconceivable, unheard of, impossible.

Old Dunbar would not have it that his daughter had been haled into the net of this fiend. Of all people Eglah was the last to belong there.

"It can't be the same," the farmer stormed. "This feller married all these women for money. He never got a cent with Eglar. He couldn't 'a' married her for money."

"No," Brocklebank mumbled with a kind of funereal piety. "He married her for love. He took the love that belonged to me. But I'll get even with him. I'll make him sorry he ever—"

He choked on his own wrath and the futility of it. He did not think of the incongruity of such vengeance frenzy in the apostle of all-encompassing pity.

Old Dunbar thought of the shotgun in the closet upstairs. He had killed skunks with it and rattlesnakes and, in the old days, a wolf. He wanted to shatter the beast that had perhaps destroyed his child. His mind was busy with the imagined roar and the plunge of the shot into the reeling hulk.

But the wolf was almost a continent's width away and guarded by his jailers, protected by the state from individual reprisal. Dunbar raged against the courts and the orderly processes and felt for the first time in his own quiet bosom the black justice of lynch law.

At last the father put on his coat, hitched up his horses and with the professor at his side drove into town to see a lawyer and put into his clumsy hands the problems that cried for swift solution. He lashed the horses and yelled at them and jerked

the lines to hold them back that he might lash them the harder because he was himself lashed and restrained and lashed again by many frenzies.

After an anxious night and a day and another night, an answer came saying that there was no hint of any such woman as Eglah Dunbar found among Smith's effects, and that when questioned he denied knowledge of such a person. The district attorney added that he hoped this was true, but advised the father to come on and see if he could identify the prisoner.

Professor Brocklebank asked permission to go along.

Dunbar welcomed the teacher's companionship and the school board granted him leave of absence with a kind of melancholy pride in being thus connected with a case so illustrious.

Before the journey was begun, Smith of the many aliases had recovered sufficiently to be put on trial.

The presence in the Western city of the witnesses against the incredible villain, their recitals of their griefs and of his treacheries and his smiling demeanor in the prisoner's box, so infuriated the people that on the very evening of the arrival of Dunbar and Brocklebank a mob attacked the automobile carrying Smith from the courthouse back to the jail.

The guards were well armed and in the name of the law put up a desperate fight for a precious charge they loathed. In the dark scrimmage where everybody struck at everybody else he managed to slip through and escape.

In the dismal railroad station the two men sank down on a seat and gnawed their own bitter hearts.

The final document in the case of the People vs. John Smith, alias Edward Blake, alias etc., was one that he wrote himself. His words were all the wilder for being scrawled across the pious lyrics of Watts and Havergal with their mournful confessions of original sin and their rejoicings over redemption through the blood of the Lamb. This is what he left as it was transcribed with some corrections and punctuations:

VI

MY SOUL is like this church steeple where I'm hideing out from the mob. I can hear the moter horns baying down there like bloodhounds. I can see the headlights of the cars running through the city and out the country roads as if they was flash-lamps of the police searching in a back yard.

I got in the cellar of the church (Continued on page 106)

The D A N G E R

By Berton B

Illustrations by Sed



John Henry Hubbell had come to a time
Or era or season of life
Which some men consider precisely their prime;
When most of the struggle and strife
Is over and finished—at least in a measure—
And there is a plenty of money and leisure.
John Henry's children were both of them grown
And busy with carving careers of their own;
His wife spent her days
In various ways
But mostly conducting some charity drive;
Which left many chances to John Henry Hubbell
For getting in trouble,
(And Fate is exceedingly prone to contrive
Some trouble for men who have come to the stage
Which John had arrived at, the Dangerous Age
Of—say, forty-five!)

The strains and the stresses
Of business adventure
Had kept him from "messes"
Which people might censure,
But now that his labors were somewhat less rigorous
John, being vigorous,
Healthy and human and still full of pep,
Began to "step out" without watching his step.
His car could be seen
Outside the stage door
Whence some gay chorine,
Or perhaps three or four,
Would presently issue to go for a spin,
Or join in a party where John bought the gin;
His face grew familiar at many road houses
Where he was the center of high speed carouses.
At gay cabarets all the head waiters knew him,
The cabaret "artists" would call him by name,
Sometimes, when he entered, gay kisses they blew
him,
For John, as a spender, was gaining in fame.
He looked like a live one, and wise dames who lamped
him
Quite often came up to his table and vamped him.

Years of society
Dull and respectable
Made impropriety
Rather delectable;
John found much pleasure in making things hum,
There is no doubt he was traveling some!

Dulcie Dorema, the chorister queen
Occupied most of John Henry's attention;
She was a gold digger, avid and keen,
Ready and willing at all times to mention
Things that she happily hoped might be hers
(Jewels and knickknacks and dresses and furs).



When he first met her, John Henry, poor fish,
Took great delight in fulfilling each wish,
But as their social acquaintance proceeded
Dulcie found more and more things that she needed.
John Henry's purse wasn't bottomless, quite,
So he protested to Dulcie one night,
"Have a heart, Dulcie; I like you a lot
But, kiddo, you're costing me more than I've got!"
"I know you're just thoughtless, but nevertheless
You're plunging me into financial distress.
I've reached the end
Of the wad I can spend
So I am asking you, like a good friend——"
"Listen, Old Dear, to my silvery laughter!"
Dulcie responded. "It's cash I am after,

ER O U S A G E

on Braley

by Seddie B. Aspell

Rhino and kale,
Shekels and chink!
Why would a frail
Chase with a gink

Several centuries older than her

If he can't pungle with plenty of stuff?

If it's just friendship I want, I prefer

Some snappy kid!

If you ain't got enough

Bones and mazuma to keep up the pace,

Right about face!

You're kinda shopworn, climb back on your shelf."

Thus Dulcie mocked him,

And, frankly, it shocked him

Chiefly because he had fancied himself

Loved for his own sake and not for his pelf.

Thus, while the scorn of Miss Dulcie still smarted,

Madder but wiser, John Henry departed.

2

Far from that section of legalized pillage

Spoken of mostly as Longacre Square,

John sought the neighborhood known as The Village,

Where they breath "atmosphere" rather than air;

Where the Blue Ponies, Pink Pups and Red Camels

Give you surroundings extremely bohemian;

Where Art is Art with no puritan trammels,

Where there are attics that one can be dreamy in,

Dreamy, impractical, hopeful and poor;

Where there are "nuts" no asylum could cure;



Where every radical cult has its devotees,

Scorning convention with careless disdain,

Sneering at fashion and all of its levities,

Living their lives with "no striving for gain";

Where bourgeois visitors go to be shocked

(Seldom succeeding, but getting a thrill

When they see girls who are bobbed-haired and
smocked

Smoking with fervor as girls often will).

Down in the Village, then, Hubbell meandered,

And, in his middle-aged fashion, philandered,

Chatted and flirted with bright little cuties,

Nattily dressed (for I'm setting it down

Most of the Village's feminine beauties

Prove to be flappers from farther uptown).

John Henry danced with them,

Grew quite entranced with them,

Fell for the stuff that the flappers would hand him,

Told of his longings for "Color and Life"!

Hinted his wife

Though a fine woman, did not understand him.

Tessie McDonald was one little wren

John Henry met with again and again:

Joyous and witty,

Peppy and pretty,

Full of the slang and the lore of the city,

Tessie was highly attractive, in sooth,

For, besides everything else, she had Youth.

Youth—which John Henry was seeking to find again

Youth—which had stirred in the depths of his mind again.

Tessie was merry

And Tessie was bright

Her dancing was airy

As that of a sprite,

She had a blithe manner, a humorous tongue,

And—she treated Hubbell as if he were young!

She knew he was wedded

But—well, she was bored

With flippers light headed

Whose brain cells were stored



With nothing whatever that thrilled her or stirred,
And—that's why the rest of this story occurred.
For John Henry oftentimes flung a mean line,
And, after some lessons, he shook a smooth slipper,
And also he took her to places to dine
Which would have bankrupted a hopeful young
 flipper;
And so things went on
With Tessie and John

And John grew more youthful and stylish and dapper
From palling around with this smart little flapper.
Her mind was so eager
And life and its phases so seemed to intrigue her
It greatly enhanced all her natural charm,
And John squired her constantly. "Where is the
 harm."
He said to himself, "in a friendship platonic?"
And Fate smiled a smile that was grimly ironic.



One night as they ambled through Washington Park
Discussing—some subject, it doesn't much matter—
They seated themselves on a bench in the dark
And right in the midst of her gay girlish chatter
John put his two arms around Tessie—and kissed her!

She freed herself, then in a voice that would blister,
She cried, with an anger too hot to assuage,
"Oh, aren't you ashamed of yourself—at your age?
You horrid old roué!
I thought you were nice,
I've valued your friendship, your aid and advice,
I've greatly admired you because—well, because
You seemed like the sort that my own father was!
I knew you were married, but thought, even then,
We might be good pals—what a fool I have been!
I've stood for the jokes of the rest of the crowd
Who nicknamed you "Grandpa," I've said I was proud

To have such a friend,
And now all of this
Has come to an end
Because of that kiss.

"I'd hate to imagine my father would make
The kind of a spectacle you do, old thing,
A fat and ridiculous middle-aged rake,
The Fall of the year masquerading as Spring!
Go, John Henry Hubbell, go back to your wife,
Quit sowing wild oats at your season of life!"
Once more, after protests, a trifle faint hearted,
John Henry accepted the hint, and departed.

Back home to the fold went this middle-aged strayer;
The hair at his temples looked thinner and grayer,
He knew now, in truth,
The cruel conclusion
That middle-aged youth
Is but a delusion.

His wife met him pleasantly, quietly kissed him,
Then hurried away—for she never had missed him!
John smiled a wry smile and he drearily muttered,
"I fluttered away, she don't know that I fluttered;
I come back a prodigal—no one's excited,
There's no fatted calf and no bonfires are lighted,
The middle-aged wanderer surely gets stung,
And when he comes back no thanksgiving is sung,
No one celebrates the return of the rover.
—The prodigal son of the Bible was young,
While I'm an old dub."
So John went to his club,
For his Dangerous Age was undoubtedly over!



By FRANK R. ADAMS

Youth,
Love—
and a large dash of
Humor

\$ XX

Illustrations by
Grant T. Reynard

BARNABY BIEGLER, assistant cashier of the Boone-socket State Bank, examined the five twenty dollar bills. Four of them seemed unquestionably good.

In the case of the fifth he hesitated about making up his mind.

The old lady who had handed the money in was waiting for the bank draft which she was purchasing to send away.

He knew her well. She was Mrs. MacCurdy, the friend of his mother when she was alive, and a neighbor and counselor in days when he, Barnaby, was getting his education in the streets and alleys of the Shantytown wards of the city.

He knew, too, just exactly how she had earned that money—on her knees over the tiled floors of the Chamber of Commerce building, with a scrubbing brush in one hand and a pail of sloppy, soapy water just in front of her. Further, he knew about the interest on the mortgage long, long overdue which Mrs. MacCurdy had to pay that day or else lose pretty much all she had. Probably she had skimmed her meals for months to get the hundred dollars together.

He looked at the seamed, tired face on the other side of the brass bars. It might have been his own mother, he reflected.

Personal considerations have nothing to do with the ethics of banking but Barney decided that he had arrived at a place where he could make up a rule for himself to cover the case.

So he wrote out the draft and placed a paperweight over the five twenties so they would not get mixed with the cash in his drawer.

But when Mrs. MacCurdy took her draft and started away from the window he picked up the money and detained her a moment.

"Mrs. MacCurdy," he asked, "do you happen to remember where you got this new twenty dollar bill?"

"The new one? Sure, that's the one me lodger gave me."

"You have a lodger now?"

"Yes. I had two but one of 'em got away without paying his bill. That's what made it so hard to raise the money this time."



"When did your lodger pay you this money?"

"Last night. I'm sure about that because I wasn't expecting it. I went up to ask for the money or the room and"—grimly—"I got the money. 'Twas a miracle."

Barney examined the bill more closely. "Well, a near miracle at least," he conceded.

When she had gone and he had satisfied the wants of the queue of customers which had accumulated during her presence, he put the new twenty dollar bill in his pocket and wrote a debit slip against his own slender savings account which he placed in the cash along with the eighty dollars.

One of the rules of the institution for which he worked demanded that he pick up a stamp which lay on his counter, spread out the new treasury note and print across its face *Counterfeit* and forward it to Washington to be destroyed.

But Barney equivocated to his conscience by claiming that the twenty did not come under his official jurisdiction. It was his own, not the bank's, because he had given his personal funds in exchange for it. As a private individual he had made no promise to cancel "home brew" currency.

He could not well afford the loss of a "double sawbuck." True, it was better for him to stand it than for poor Mrs. MacCurdy, but Barney, too, worked hard for his living and anyone who thinks that handling money all day and checking up the result

after banking hours is the life of Riley is hereby advised to try it—especially under the new Federal banking laws.

More than the loss of the money Barney resented the idea that it should be someone like Mrs. MacCurdy or himself who was the goat. Barney was a "hard-boiled egg" underneath a fine glaze exterior finish. He had ceased to be a street tough about twelve years before because he had noticed that street toughs never get anywhere and he had thereafter applied himself diligently to acquiring education and polish; but beneath the surface he still had a little savagery in him. "A lamp for a lamp and a cuspid for a canine" was his unspoken code.

So after supper he set out for Shantytown with nothing much in his pockets but carfare, the counterfeit twenty and his two fists, which he had once upon a time trained to hit almost exactly where he aimed them. He had an idea that it might require force to make Mrs. MacCurdy's lodger eat the pseudo government certificate.

II

"Is YOUR lodger in?" he demanded of Mrs. MacCurdy when the latter had received him in her parlor, which was about the size of a piano case and seemed crowded with furniture.

"I think so," she answered.

"If you please, ma'am, I'll have a word with the scoundrel." His indignation had gotten the better of his tongue and a word slipped out that betrayed his true feelings.

"What'll ye be meanin' by 'scoundrel'?" the lady demanded. "You're mistaken, ye are, Barney—"

"If the gentleman wishes to see me I'm here."

The doorway framed the unexpected outline of a woman, a young but rather weary looking woman.

"It's difficult not to overhear a private conversation in this house," she apologized. "The walls are so thin." To her landlady she said, "If you'll introduce us, please."

"You're the cashier at the bank, aren't you?" the girl said when the elder woman had made them acquainted. Margaret Grey was her name, it appeared. "Mrs. MacCurdy has spoken often about you and how kind you have been to her always."

After that it was difficult for Barney to go on and explain what his errand had been and just what he had meant by the word "scoundrel." You can't be as nasty as you know how to a pair of wistful gray eyes and lips that seem to have stood all they can without trembling.

He had a chance to study her even more fully while he was trying to think up an adequate apology. She was slim, very, but small-framed and rounded just enough so that her arms and wrists were not bony. Her dress was a dark blue jersey—every shop girl has one—and it fitted her very loosely. Perhaps it had belonged to someone else originally; either that or she had grown thinner since she bought it.

All in all she was a wisp of a girl—a man that loved her could have carried her indefinitely without tiring. That thought made Barney glance hastily at her left hand. No, she was neither married nor engaged—at least not visibly. Not that it was any of his business—he had no time for women—but that's where a man always looks next after the ankles and the face.

Mutual pleasantries over, Margaret Grey inquired curiously, "Why, Mr. Biegler, did you call me a scoundrel without ever having seen me?"

He laughed and lied quickly. "It wasn't you I was speaking of. Mrs. MacCurdy has another lodger—one that jumped his bill recently. He was the one I wanted to see."

"But you could scarcely expect to find him here," the girl pursued.

"He might have come back. Did you know him or anything about him?" With that question as a starter he led the con-



"Who the Sam-hill is this?"

versation away from the object of his visit and finally steered it into the channel of personalities.

Margaret accepted him at face value and drew him out of his customary shell. She had a letter to mail and they walked over to the car line where there was a mailbox. The envelope was a large white one and she had to bend the edge a little to get it into the slot.

When they returned Barney kept her outside on the tiny veranda. It was not dark yet and he could study her face. It was a fascinating curriculum for one who was a freshman in the School of Applied Femininity. They sat there an hour.

He became so interested in it, had accumulated so much material for pleasant dreams and speculations, that what happened next was a distinctly unpleasant shock. The seemed to be no excuse for staying longer this first time so he finally spoke of going but asked if he might call again soon.

She was troubled. He could sense that, even though by that time her expressive face was not visible except as a white mask that might have been the countenance of a lovely ghost.

"I'm so sorry," she faltered, "but I'm afraid it is too late."

She didn't say what she meant by "too late" but Barney guessed. He insisted that she tell him. "Why?"

"I shall not be here tomorrow, for one thing."

"But you can give me your new address."

"I don't think I could receive you where I'm going to be."

"Why?"

demanded
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Mrs. Mac
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demanded Abner Locke just as Barney was all set to fling up his right hand.

She fluttered her hands against her breast. "You have no right to ask me such questions," she protested piteously.

"I know I've no right," Barney admitted soberly, for the spectacle of a girl in distress was outside the pale of his practically exclusive masculine world, "but I'd so like to help you," he added wistfully. "There's something about you that—"

His pause was eloquent.

If he could have witnessed the scene as a spectator he would have regarded himself with amazement. He, Barney Biegler, the "concrete egg," yearning over a wisp of femininity he had met for the first time so short a while ago! Preposterous! And threatening to involve himself more intimately with her fortunes if she would let him! Utterly ridiculous!

And yet, if he had known how, he would have been making love to her. Perhaps she knew, anyway, that he wanted to. Women, they say, are keen guessers about that sort of thing.

"Why can't you let me see you where you are going to be?" Barney insisted gently. He could guess the answer but he needs must hear it from her own lips.

"Oh, if you must know!" she exclaimed, "it is because I have taken a step which shuts me off from everything I want to do, from people I want to know, like Mrs. MacCurdy and—and you."

"It has to do with that money—that twenty dollars you paid Mrs. MacCurdy last night?"

She paused wonderingly. "Why yes, but how did you know?"

"Never mind how I know. Tell me if I am right in supposing that you accepted that twenty dollar bill from a man who expects to buy your favor with money?"

"Yes," she admitted, "and I never should have given in on my own account, but when Mrs. MacCurdy came to me last night that bill lay on my dresser in an envelope addressed to me. I knew it was there because he sends one to me every week to test me out. But I always send the envelopes back unopened or always did until last night. What could I do? The poor woman had to have money. Perhaps you don't know how dreadful it is to be poor and to see the little that you have slipping away from you. Mrs. MacCurdy has been like a mother to me when I needed help and I couldn't fail her—could I? I had nothing else. So I gave it to her. I wrote to him today telling him what I had done and saying that I would give in."

"You sold yourself for twenty dollars?" Barney demanded incredulously.

"I suppose you might call it that," she assented listlessly. "But I could scarcely claim to be a success by myself. I suppose I should have had to give in sooner or later anyway."

"It was that letter which we posted?" Barney asked, rather awed at standing so close to the machinery of fate.

"Yes, that was it."

They sat, moody, introspective, both oppressed by the future, the girl hopeless, the man cornered, almost suffocated, but still looking for a way out, for a means to save this wistful girl from the fate to which she seemed to think that she was bound.

Unless he could remove the menace, relieve her from the obligation, he would have no right to tell her the wild thoughts he was thinking.

There was a way!

He wondered if he had time. It wasn't exactly playing fair but who was bound by honor in this game in which a woman was selling her soul for a counterfeit twenty dollar bill? Time was all he needed.

"I must go," he said brusquely, rising. "May I see you tomorrow evening?"

"I'm afraid not. I'll not be here."

"If I find you, will you see me?"

"Perhaps."

"Then good night."

"Good night."

III

BARNEY got to the mail box just as the collector was opening it. "I put a letter in there awhile back," Barney told him, "and I'm almost certain I forgot to stamp it. Will you let me fix it?" Barney had an open stamp book in his hand.

"Sure. Who is it addressed to?"

"It's that large white envelope," said Barney pointing to the one he remembered with the edge folded.

The mailman fished it out. "Why, this has got a stamp on it, and a special delivery, too."

"Gee, so it has! My mistake. I'm apt to be absent minded that way. Thanks anyway."

The mail collector drove away and Barney took a street car headed in the opposite direction. The address he had read on the envelope was in the fashionable part of town. Barney was going there.

There was blood in his eye and a lust for battle in his heart. Any man who would take advantage of a woman's dire necessity to palm off counterfeit money on her must be the lowest kind of a scoundrel no matter if he did live in the Hillcrest district.

IV

HAVING the address didn't do Barney an awful lot of good. A butler at the door informed him that Mr. Abner Locke was out and managed to imply some way that he would always be out so far as Barney was concerned.

Barney stood on the sidewalk after his rebuff helpless with rage. People who lived in that kind of house baffled him. Three stories of stone surrounded by a high iron picket fence was just as impregnable as a moated castle would have been. Something told Barney that if he were to go to the policeman on the beat and tell him that Abner Locke was a counterfeiter, a white-slaver and probably seven other kinds of a criminal he would doubtless be arrested himself. And he regarded it as highly important that he retain his own freedom.

As it was he did not have enough evidence against the owner of the forbidding looking building to convict him of being either a manufacturer or a "shover" of "queer." He did not doubt that somewhere in that house was a complete engraving and printing outfit but he felt that he would have to locate it or at least know where to look before he dared instigate a raid.

Barney consumed a dozen cigarettes walking up and down the length of the iron paling that separated the grounds from the sidewalk.

And thinking.

A motorcycle swooped into the side street from the boulevard and a uniformed rider got off and looked at the gate for a number.

He was a special delivery messenger from the post office.

Amateur detectives are proverbially fast thinkers. Barney would not have placed himself in the sleuth class but he certainly did some swift mental acrobatics right then and there which ought to qualify him to take his place along with Messrs. Kennedy, Holmes, LeCoq, etcetera.

"Something for me?" Barney asked, walking up briskly as if he were just arriving from somewhere.

"What's your name?" asked the messenger.

"Locke," Barney replied promptly, "Abner Locke."

"Correct. Special for you, Mr. Locke. Sign here."

Barney blithely committed forgery. He, who three hours before had regarded signing another man's name as second only to murder, did that very thing without a tremor. An awakening of primitive emotion such as love or hate certainly knocks off the veneer of moral inhibitions with amazing swiftness.

Having signed the lie in the book Barney gave the boy a

quarter and walked inside the gates as if he owned that place and several additional estates in the country. On the steps he paused with a bunch of keys in his hand and waited until the motorcyclist was well down the street. Then he walked out of the gates once more, the large white envelope in his pocket.

Just how he should use it he was, as yet, undetermined. He finally decided that the best thing for Miss Grey's sake would be first of all to return the twenty dollars in it. By extracting her note and placing the twenty in its place he believed that he would release her from all obligation to the doubtless repulsive villain, Abner Locke. Tomorrow he could go to her and explain what he had done. From then on he hoped that nature and spring and all that sort of thing would take a hand in helping him to become better acquainted with the first woman who had stirred his pulse.

The matter of proving that Mr. Locke was a counterfeiter could wait awhile. He, Barney, could take that up with the secret service department after the girl in the case had been extricated from her present and pressing predicament.

To make the exchange in the contents of the envelope Barney went to his own lodgings, which were about a mile from the Hillcrest district. There, in his own rooms, he examined the purloined letter with critical approval. He liked her handwriting. It wasn't in the least weak. She must indeed be in an extremity to be taking the course toward which she had steered. People who wrote like that usually stood on their own feet.

Feeling much more like a crook than when he had signed Mr. Locke's name, Barney started a tiny electric chafing dish, which had been given him for Christmas and which up to then had been a perfectly useless piece of baggage, and heated some water in it. In the steam of this he peeled open the envelope flap.

Her letter lay in his hands.

There was no term of address, nothing but just a beginning:

Owing to a necessity which has arisen and which is entirely beyond my own control I am forced to accept your bounty.

In return I agree to pay the price—I give up. It might as well be all over at once so I shall arrive tonight, shortly after this letter, I imagine—anyway as soon as I can pack my few things and find a taxi. The taxi you will have to pay for as I haven't a cent.

Yours,

Margaret Grey

That changed everything. Barney had not dreamed that she had planned to leave Mrs. MacCurdy's that same night. He quite understood the impulse which had prompted her decision, at that. Get it over with was one of his own mottoes. Poor, brave child, putting her house in order there at Mrs. MacCurdy's, paying her obligations, stripping herself to nothing and saying good by to the existence she wished to lead, shutting out from her life Barney himself whom she probably thought that she had met too late to save her and then with a high head going to this wealthy vulture to suffer what for a woman is the extreme penalty.

By heaven, it must not be! Barney loved her—he might just as well admit that—and while it was doubtless a hopeless infatuation it was something he was going to carry with him to the grave and it was a sufficient motive for doing the only foolish, impulsive action of his life. The woman a man fights for is his mate whether she ever knows it or not.

Barney was going to fight.

He sealed the letter and out of the bottom of his oldest trunk dug up the uniform he had worn as a bank messenger. He was still thin although he had grown much longitudinally. The trousers were too short altogether so he wore a pair of more recent vintage, but he managed to get into the coat even if the sleeves were about four inches scant and the waistline hit him slightly below the chest. And the peaked cap could be coaxed to stay on.

To the casual observer he was as good a special delivery messenger as you'd see in any crap game in the world. All he needed was a motorcycle, and Barney supplied the lack of gasoline transportation by hiring a passing taxicab which he met on his way to the street car line. It seemed to him that speed was the essence of the exigency.

As he arrived at the Locke palace another taxicab was driving away. Hers, Barney concluded with a sudden tightening of his muscles, a preliminary call to action. He had not arrived a moment too soon.

Barney told the driver of his car to wait and ran briskly through the gates and up the steps of the mansion.

The butler, whom Barney already hated, looked him over suspiciously but apparently failed to recognize him because he admitted him and ordered him to wait (Continued on page 19)



"Marty
eats every-
thing," said
Mrs. Callahan.
"Last Sunday
Jim tried him
on a sardine."

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

*A story of Small Fingers
Round a Mother's Heart*

Ma Callahan Capitulates

Illustrations by James Montgomery Flagg

"IT'S a funny thing the Lord would make children like that, if it was only to have their throats cut open, and their appendixes out, and the dear knows what else done to them!" said Mrs. Callahan mildly, rocking back and forth in the low chair beside the kitchen stove and tenderly readjusting the position of little Martin Devlin, lying asleep in her lap. "It's a wonder they wouldn't let the poor little things alone!"

"Oh, my, they'll never let anybody alone these days!" young Mrs. Mooney said bitterly. "There's ladies always stepping through the schools, and if it isn't teeth, it's tonsils or flat feet or whatever! I declare it's terrible hard on the children; last winter I had the three of them home two days with arms swelled up the size of a watermelon, and you carrying it home from market! That was the vaccination they had on them that time, and tomorrow it'll be something else altogether, and they as innocent as sheep at a fair!"

"It does them no hurt!" Kate Oliver, thin, sweet-faced and intelligent-eyed, with her own girl baby drowsy in her arms, said unexpectedly. The three women, with five small children, were spending a wet afternoon together. "I wouldn't wonder did it do them good," she added. "They took the tonsils out of Ella's Frank that was so spindling, and he's twice the size now that he was a year ago!"

"I hold no dealings with the whole lot of them," Mrs. Callahan said disapprovingly. "What do the children go to school for—to have this one and that one lookin' at their teeth as if they were horses in a market? I raised my five, and I had the five Devlins, and poor Clark, and now I'll raise this one"—Martin was waking—"without being beholden to anny one of them for advice!"

"There's a lot more than that in it," said Kate thoughtfully, "and sometimes you wonder why they give so much time and money to it unless it's really to help the children!"

"Help them? What help would they want," Mrs. Callahan asked roundly, "except to eat their meals and study their lessons and go to church?"

"Well, Aunt Agnes," Kate persisted rather uncertainly, "I think they're trying to prevent measles and things—do you see? Vaccination and tonsils and teeth—oh, but they go further than that! The children in the Third have hot soup every day, with calories in it—I don't know what they are, they say they're very good for them!—and didn't a very nice lady come in to see me the other day and asked me about what milk I gave the children and what doctor I was going to have for the new little one—how did she ever know it I don't know, but there she was! And she telling me to feed them mush and baked apples and I don't know what all, and they weren't to have anything fried—she was very sweet with them!"

"Why wouldn't they have anything fried?" demanded Mrs. Callahan in amazement.

"Well, she said it was too rich on them entirely!"

"Too rich!" said pale little Jule Mooney indignantly. "A lot she'd know! I'll bet she had none of her own!"

"No, she was Miss Something," Kate admitted. "But God knows I'd want to do what was best for the children," she added doubtfully.

"Then you let them eat what they want to," Mrs. Callahan advised her warmly. "I've no patience with them—ger'ls that ought to be having their own husbands and children, runnin' about the country telling others that has them what they must do!"

"I started in giving Bernadette just bread and milk for her supper," Kate confessed, "and a fine roar she set up for a taste of the pork or the apple pie that her father'd be eating. But I declare she did sleep better, and the skin cleared up on her something grand!"

"Pork or apple pie never hurt one of mine, nor a taste of anything it'd be fancying," Mrs. Callahan said, unconvinced. "This feller," she said, of the now lively Martin, "he's a queer one about eating. Sometimes it's a banana he wants, or he'll yell for a piece of coconut cake or a taste of sausage. But he's very fussy, his stomach is like poor Kate's, and mostly we have to coax milk into him by puttin' a dash of coffee or tea or whatever into it."

"He's a beautiful child for the poor little infant he was," Kate said, with an affectionate kiss for him as he stood at her knee looking straight into her face with the wistful smile that motherless babies sometimes have. "And the measles didn't pull him down any, did they?" she asked.

"He hardly had them at all," his foster-mother said quickly. "They were out on him very light before ever I knew what it was. The child was never in bed a minute. But there you are again," she added aggrievedly. "If they didn't come and plaster me gate with a big sign from the Board of Health, the way you'd think there was plague in the house! And it was only yestherday, as I was telling you and Jule, that they came to fumigate the whole place!"

Kate and Jule laughed unfeelingly, and Mrs. Callahan laughed too, amused at her own predicament.

"Pull the teapot over, Kate," she said, "and Jule, you get the children some doughnuts. I feel as if a good cup of tea would taste right to me!"

"No, no doughnuts, Dette," Kate was overheard saying to her first-born. "You and Mary Marg'ret can have some of Aunt Ag's lovely bread and butter, with sugar on it!"

Mrs. Callahan raised her eyebrows, but she was in her own kitchen and the instinct of hospitality was strong.

"Now it's doughnuts, is it?" she contented herself with asking patiently.

"Well, they *are* kind of rich, Aunt Ag, just before supper," the young mother pleaded.

Mrs. Callahan sighed, and shook her head, and shut her lips, and said no more. But it was not like Kate to differ with her, and she did not like it.

For Mrs. Callahan, in the last year or two, had had the delightful experience of finding herself the most important person in her own particular group. She was by no means the richest, the cleverest, the most powerful or the oldest; on no one single score was she supreme.

But on all four scores, and many others, she held what might have been called points, and these points, summed up, brought her to a natural position of authority and veneration. She was younger than Mrs. Clay Riley, but Mrs. Riley had not been so long in America; she was much less rich than Mrs. Peter Wolfe, but Peter Wolfe was a victim of arthritis and his good wife was never free; she was neither so witty nor so sharp-tongued as Frank Dempsey's mother, nor was there anything about her, as a hard working, quiet widow with four children, that indicated either the possession or the love of power.

Yet it began to be increasingly noticeable that the name of Mrs. Callahan was invoked, that the advice of Mrs. Callahan was sought, and that the disapproval of Mrs. Callahan was adequate and blighting. Engaged couples began to form the habit of calling upon her, and she always kissed the girls, and often kissed the raw, red-faced boys too, upon these occasions, in a fashion wholly matriarchal. The old people drifted in to see her as a matter of course, frail, old, clean, staggering men and women, with gnarled hands and sunken eyes and thinning hair. Their dissipation was to move feebly up the street a block or

two to Mrs. Callahan's kitchen, there to chew or to smoke or to drink strong, sugary, hot black tea, as taste dictated, and to hear the old names and of the old places, to remember smoky, far-away interiors and peat fires and the way the little calves did be blatting on a fine Fair Day, when the sun would be going down.

Little noisy grandchildren would come in for them. Mrs. Callahan made the youngsters welcome too; she knew the smallest of them by name and nature, and while distributing fresh cookies from which sugar coated wastefully she could ask shrewd questions as to arithmetic and deportment. Best of all, to Mrs. Callahan, were afternoons like this one, with her own contemporaries, or the married women some years younger, whose trials with growing families took her back to the happy times twenty years and less ago when Matt was alive, and when her own family had numbered five dear and troublesome and loving children instead of the three young women and the one grown man who had taken their places today.

There was no scandal in the clean but disorderly kitchen, but there was plenty of gossip; if gossip is a mere interested retailing of the truth. There were always changes enough, events, calamities, possibilities enough, in the lives of the score of families that formed the colony to keep speculation and comment endlessly alive.

Her daughters, Mary and Josie Callahan, when they were little girls, used to look in bewilderment sometimes from their mother's face to the caller's, wondering wherein lay the fascination and the thrill.

Since the absorption of little Martin Devlin into the Callahan household, now eighteen months ago, the neighborhood had found a fresh reason for running in at all times to see how poor Rose's laddeen was thriving. Rose, widowed at twenty, had been widely loved, and when Rose, after one weak smile at her new-born son, had followed her young husband beyond the veil, the pale and puny Martin had inherited, as it were, something of the love his mother left behind her.

He was no longer pale and puny, although blond almost to an ashen fairness, and delicately and lightly built. Everyone loved him now, and the Callahan girls and Jim rarely came home at night without some small present for Marty. They accused their mother of loving him more than anything else in the world, and it was true that blue-eyed, blond, gentle little Martin, coming to her arms when she had had several years in which to remember longingly the joy of having a baby, had become the center of the world to her.

Her own children had been sturdy brunettes, with thick eyelashes that melted into the healthy down of their red and brown faces, thick curly black hair that crept down close to the strong lines of their heavy eyebrows, hard hands, clear voices and ready laughs. But Martin was like a little bird that cowers, close and confident, against the bulk of some larger animal that protects it; his blue eyes met hers appealingly in any tiny difficulty; whenever she looked out at him in the yard or went to pick him from his crib, he gave her rapturous smiles, and he would stop even his rare crying, with tears on his fair eyelashes, and break into a quivering little laugh when he heard "Gogga's" voice. Often, when the soft, sweet little body had gone to sleep, in her arms, she would look down at him with a little trembling of her firm mouth.

"I doubt will he live to comb gray hairs, this little one-eeen!" she would say.

On this particular afternoon, at five o'clock, when the rain ceased long enough to show a cold yellow sunset and twilight lay chilly and forlorn upon dripping bare trees, shabby wooden houses, and dwindling, pock-marked snow, Kate and Jule began to gather their children and belongings for the two-blocks' walk home.

Mrs. Callahan had made her tenth trip to the bedroom next the kitchen for Kate's missing overshoe when there was a knock at the side door. The women looked at each other in surprise; it was an odd hour for a caller. Jule, being nearest, opened the door, with her infant son seated comfortably on her hip.

Into the light came a resolute-jawed but sweet-faced woman of perhaps thirty-five, neatly hatted and wrapped, with an umbrella and raincoat. She looked, brightly expectant, from one face to another, touched little Julie Mooney under the chin, sank easily and quietly into a kitchen chair and addressed Kate pleasantly.

"Mrs. Callahan? And is there a child here named Martin Devlin?"



Jim made the dash into the pitiless cold of the night with Marty loosely balled into a great cocoon.

Kate, smitten dumb and instinctively hostile, indicated her aunt silently. Mrs. Callahan, who hated the mere thought that Martin was not her own, smiled uneasily and automatically and picked Martin from the floor in the very middle of one of his rapturous little rushes to and fro. She sat down opposite the stranger with him on her lap; Martin, indifferently sucking upon a slippery section of doughnut, stared at her solemnly. Kate and Jule, interested and unobtrusive, sat down too.

"I am Miss Walbridge," said the caller in a friendly fashion. "I think this little laddie has had the measles, hasn't he? Here, dear," she interrupted herself as if involuntarily, taking the doughnut in her clean, cool fingers, from Martin's little hand and tossing it into the sink, "you don't want that nasty thing, do you?"

Instantly alarmed, Mrs. Callahan's geniality retired and her face became an impassive mask.

"He wasn't sick at all!" she said, uneasily casual.

"The Board of Health sent me to ask about him," Miss Walbridge said sympathetically. Mrs. Callahan did not unbend; she knew there was more to it than this. "Now tell me about him," the caller pursued in an informal, confidential fashion. "He isn't your own, I think?"

"He's my niece's child," Mrs. Callahan admitted briefly.

"Yes, of course, and a lucky baby if he only knew it!" said Miss Walbridge, warmly friendly. "But you don't let him eat doughnuts, do you?" she asked in honest alarm as Martin picked a whole one from the littered table.

"He eats everything!" stated his foster-mother firmly. "All my children have—always. He'll eat as good as you could when he feels like it. It was only last Sunday my son Jim tried him on a sardine, and the little feller ate it as serious as I could!"

"But—but my dear Mrs. Callahan," Miss Walbridge burst out, "surely you know that a baby his age shouldn't ever touch things like that! We have a little bulletin telling mothers exactly what a child between one and four should eat—have you seen it?"

"I have not then!" said Mrs. Callahan, beginning to feel nettled.

"You tell aunty that you want to grow to be a big strong man," Miss Walbridge advised the staring child playfully, "and that you must have just pure nice milk and cereals and vegetables and baked apples for a few years! And a piece of stale bread or toast with breakfast and lunch," she added, briskly turning to Martin's foster-mother, and perhaps congratulating herself upon the graceful manner in which the serious business of the call was being introduced. "Plain food, about a tablespoon of creamed carrots or spinach with lunch," she went on firmly,

"now and then a soft-boiled egg, about four ounces of beef juice, rusk, cream soups, cooked fruits—that's what we want, isn't it, dear? And *positively* no cake or pie, nothing fried, very little meat—do you see? And now—he sleeps in an airy room, does he? And does he get a good airing out of doors, or at a window, *every* day? I wish you'd bring him to the Bureau, Mrs. Callahan, and let us watch his weight—oh, how proud you'd be! Will you do that some day?"

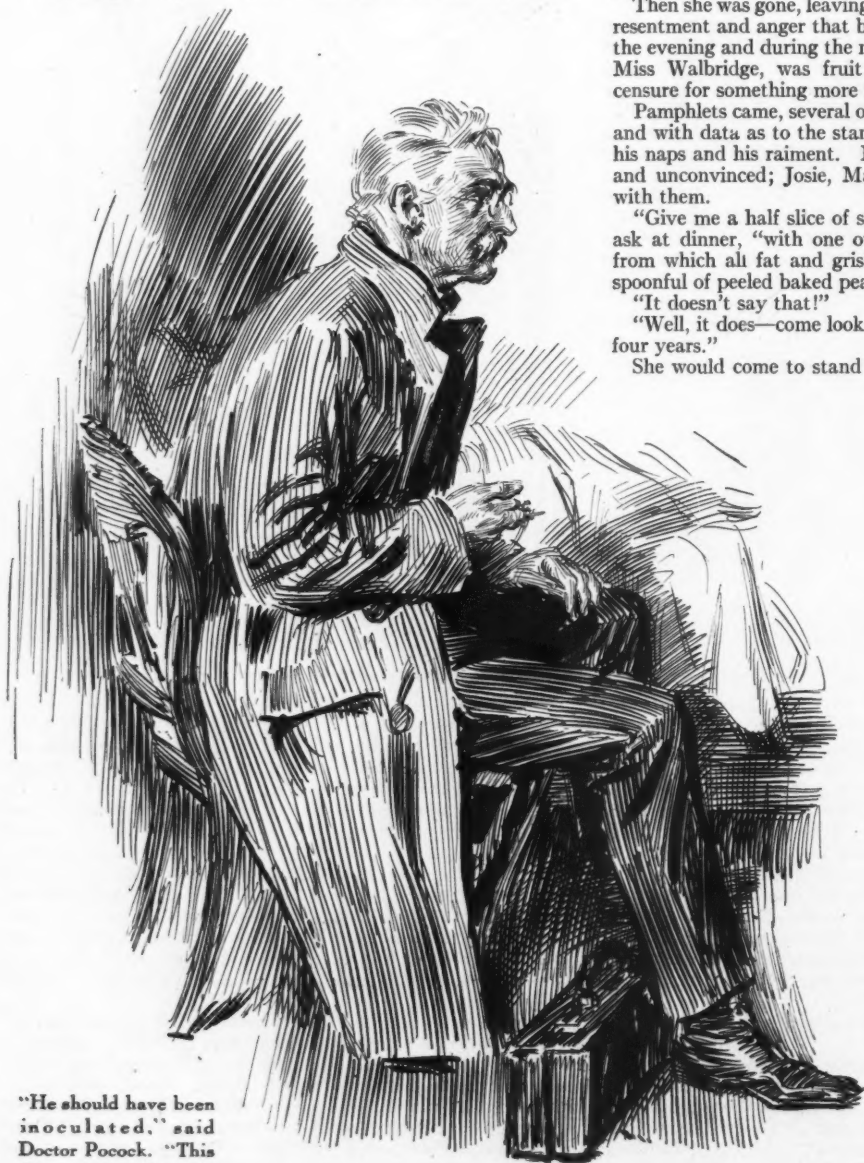
There was a sulphurous silence upon the part of Mrs. Callahan, and Jule and Kate, with the coated and hatted children clustered about them, were red-faced and speechless with resentment. But Miss Walbridge apparently saw nothing amiss.

"Plenty of fresh air," she pursued amiably, "sponge baths—he must be kept scrupulously clean——"

"I don't hold with all this monkeying with children," Mrs. Callahan said in a somewhat trembling, thick voice. "You've got your living to make, of course, and I wish you well. But it's a very funny thing that the Board of Health would send a ger'l your age into a body's house——"

"Mrs. Callahan," interrupted Miss Walbridge, swiftly and sensibly—she had met this sort of thing before—"it is for the *baby's* sake, you understand that? Ten years ago, before we began this sort of thing, the death rate among children under three years——"

"I'm obliged to you for your interest, and of course, with no



"He should have been inoculated," said Doctor Pocock. "This thing is epidemic!"

husband or children, you've got your living to make," said Mrs. Callahan, resolutely but quietly talking her down. "I'm sure I thank you kindly. Here's my son Jim." she added in relief, as Jim, big, wet, wind-blown and panting, came in out of the deepening dusk. Jim merely looked surprised at the caller and fell into a jocular conversation with Jule and Kate, who immediately seized this interruption to escape into the night, huddling before them the infants upon whom Miss Walbridge's terrible eye might next have fallen. When he came back from the steps Miss Walbridge was also in the act of departing; Jim caught her uneasy glance as he gave Martin a bag of lemon sucks.

"Oh, dear!" she said anxiously. "Now, will he eat those? He shouldn't, you know——"

"He'll eat one, or maybe two," Mrs. Callahan assured her grimly and briefly.

"Oh, but——" The caller was at the door, her left thumb ready to unfurl her umbrella. "Oh, but he shouldn't have *any*!" she protested, unwilling to leave matters in this state. Jim had shouldered Martin, whose radiant little face and blond mop looked unusually white and frail against his darkness. The man and his mother continued to regard her fluttering hesitations unsmilingly, and she had no choice but to go. She fired, rather forlornly, a parting shot. "I shall come and see you again in a day or two, dear! We must keep an eye on that little tummy of yours!"

Then she was gone, leaving Mrs. Callahan in a state of seething resentment and anger that bubbled over at intervals all through the evening and during the next day. "That one," as she called Miss Walbridge, was fruit for discussion and an object for censure for something more than a week.

Pamphlets came, several of them, filled with tables and charts, and with data as to the standard for Martin's weight, his teeth, his naps and his raiment. Mrs. Callahan read them, suspicious and unconvinced; Josie, Mary and Jim had a delightful time with them.

"Give me a half slice of stale graham bread, ma," Jim would ask at dinner, "with one ounce of finely divided broiled beef, from which all fat and gristle has been removed, and a tablespoonful of peeled baked pear!"

"It doesn't say that!"

"Well, it does—come look at it. This is a lunch—one year to four years."

She would come to stand beside him, basting spoon in hand.

"Did you ever hear the like of that!" she would marvel, her dignity soothed and her pride restored by the absurdity of it all. "Carrots and bran!" she would muse. "You'd think the young creatures were horses! He wouldn't eat it on me if I did fuss with all that," she said more than once, of Martin.

And the next time Miss Walbridge came Mrs. Callahan was very sure of herself, cool, hostile, poised. She gave the younger woman no chance; her civil, pleasant answers were monosyllabic, and the conversation, after languishing dryly for perhaps ten minutes, died away completely, leaving the enemy totally at a loss. Martin, on this occasion, was chewing upon an unripe winter pear; he offered the horrified visitor a damp bite.

"Has this little lad been vaccinated, Mrs. Callahan?"

"Oh, indeed he has, then!"

"Is he subject to throat troubles?"

"I don't——" Mrs. Callahan opened the oven door, with an end of her apron. "I don't know what you mean, 'subject,'" she said simply.

"Does he have them—sore throats?"

"He has quinsy, like his poor mother before him!" his foster mother said.

"Then if I were you I'd bring him to the clinic and have our kind Doctor Wilcox look at his tonsils," Miss Walbridge suggested persuasively. "Will you do that some day?"

"Could I offer you one?" was Mrs. Callahan's only answer as she tumbled the rich hot cookies from the pan to a waiting colander.

"Indeed you could! We unfortunates who board are only too grateful for a taste of home cooking," Miss Walbridge answered. "But seriously, about little Martin's throat. There's a great deal of diphtheria going the rounds, you know. Oh," Miss Walbridge interrupted herself involuntarily, "I wouldn't—would you? He really shouldn't have hot fresh cookies as rich as this! He scraped the bowl, you know, and now he's had that pear—"

"Put it aside, lovey, you can have it by and by," Mrs. Callahan said impassively and patiently, to Martin. Miss Walbridge's face flushed uncomfortably, but she still smiled.

"Will you ask your Gogga to bring you to see Miss Walbridge in the nice big hospital?" she coaxed the child.

"I'll ask my son Jim," Mrs. Callahan said briefly and finally. "When there's anything to be done for the child, I'm always said by him!"

Then came a long silence, which Miss Walbridge tried to fill easily and naturally by nibbling the cookie. Presently she discovered that Mrs. Callahan had filled an egg box with cookies and was presenting them to her, and the older woman's manner relaxed just a trifle as the visitor made her grateful farewells. Strange problem of a woman's pride—of a nation's pride, thought Emily Walbridge, as, baffled and discouraged, she turned her steps to the next humble dooryard; the nation that can give so nobly and so gracefully, to the last crust of bread and the last drop of blood, but that cannot accept even the simplest favor without a lowering of standards that leads to utter shameless mendicancy and degradation! She knew exactly what barriers Mrs. Callahan would have to break down to take from her either advice or help, and she sighed as she thought of the hundreds of other women who were hostile to the advance of science and blind to their own and their children's good just because it must reach them through the detested channel of state charity.

"But she seems different from most of them," Miss Walbridge mused. "She must be a wonderful woman to have brought those children up so well single-handed, and to have taken in that deaf boy and this poor little scrap of a child as well! I'll get her yet!"

One afternoon some ten days later Kate Oliver, alone this time, came into her aunt's house casually on her way home from another call. It was a dull, bleak, bitter day in early February; there was a steady wind, no clouds, no sun, only the grim nearness of a low, forbidding gray sky overhead, and under foot sidewalks frozen

hard beneath the dirty covering of the last snows. The air was freezing, it penetrated icily to the very marrow, and the shabby wooden houses of the Callahan neighborhood seemed to be withdrawn into themselves, their windows sealed and lifeless, all the vitality of their forlorn six or seven rooms concentrated in the kitchens, above which smoke rose unceasingly into the restless air.

Mrs. Callahan's house was no exception; Kate gave a great sigh of pleasure as she came in—the kitchen was a veritable oven. It was delicious to be so thoroughly and so instantly warm again; as she kissed her aunt and sat down she loosened her thick, shabby coat.

Martin was in Mary's old highchair; some rubber preserving rings and a measuring cup were before him, but he was not playing; he had evidently been dozing in his chair, but as Kate came in he awakened with a little whimper that to her trained

ear meant only one thing—no well baby ever made that odd little whining sound.

Mrs. Callahan answered Kate's instantly apprehensive look with a sigh and a nod as she lifted the little body out of the chair and sat down with him in her arms. Kate leaned over to thrust gentle, experienced fingers into the collar of the child's romper.

"He's burning up!" she announced.

"He's got a terrible throat on him!" his foster-mother admitted. "I don't know where he ever got it—he's been very complaining all day!"

"Well, you've had the doctor, Aunt Aggie?"

No, Aunt Aggie had not had the doctor. She gave no explanation; perhaps did not understand herself. It was not that she grugged little Martin the trouble or expense—she would have died for this unprotesting, feverish, suffering little soul. But she shrank with a terrified heart from the tacit admission that the baby was really ill.

"Would ye?" she asked, wincing. Kate returned roundly that she certainly would, and went at once to the telephone.

She came back defeated; Doctor Bailey was in Albany, and Doctor Pocock, who was handling his practice, was not at home. But this seemed in some vague way to ease Mrs. Callahan's fears; she said that she believed that Martin would wake up quite himself tomorrow.

When Kate had gone, and when Jim and Mary and Josie came in, he was heavily asleep. Jim went into the bedroom at about eight o'clock and was found by his mother there, studying his little sleeping foster-brother with troubled eyes.

"He seems hot, ma, and isn't he breathing queerly?"

"Maybe if I waked him



"Doctor, will he die?" faltered Mary.

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLACC

up and gave him a sup of milk?" Mrs. Callahan suggested uneasily.

"I wouldn't wake him up—" Jim said dubiously. But Martin now waked himself up, fretful and wretched. They carried him to the kitchen, damp and hot in his well washed and colorless little double gown, and Mrs. Callahan sat down with him in her lap, feeling that the sorrow that menaced her was too heavy to be borne.

"Darlin', darlin', what is it?" they heard her whisper. "Get the doctor, Jo!" she urged.

Josephine, frightened and in tears, flew to the telephone. Doctor Pocock was maddeningly hard to place; it finally developed that he was enjoying a modest rubber of bridge at the house of a friend. But he would come, he would bundle into his fur-lined coat and rouse his chauffeur and come out into the bitter night.

And come he did, a clean, gentle, white-headed old man, with gold-rimmed glasses. It was nearly ten o'clock now; he looked seriously about the circle of concerned faces in the unbelievably hot room. The little boy was very ill, should be in a hospital; it was diphtheria.

The terrible word smote Mrs. Callahan into a frozen silence. The doctor could not know it, but the disease was synonymous with death to her. One groan—it was hardly audible—was wrung from her; Mary immediately tried to speak to her, but she seemed not to hear.

"Doctor, will he die?" faltered Mary, crying hard.

The doctor shook his head faintly; he could not tell. Had the child been inoculated yet? The serum—let us see—his flat gold watch slipped out from his evening vest—he frowned:

"You are the child's father?" he asked Jim. Jim put one arm about his mother's shoulders.

"No, sir. He's my mother's adopted son—a cousin of mine," Jim answered. And to his mother he added, "Ah, don't ma!"

"I see," Doctor Pocock said absently. He looked again at his watch. "He should have been inoculated," he said. "This thing is epidemic!"

"Is it always dangerous, doctor?" Josie asked. The question was flaming in her mother's eyes. But Mrs. Callahan could not speak.

"It's not dangerous at all, with the serum treatments," the doctor said, definitely. Mrs. Callahan sucked in her breath as if she had been struck. "I should advise," Doctor Pocock said thoughtfully, "your taking him, at once to the hospital. You must wrap him well, of course. But he will need care—for a day or two. He must be watched. You will have difficulty in getting a nurse here; I doubt if you can get one. Where is the telephone?"

With the blood about her heart congealed into solid ice, Mrs. Callahan moved about what must be done. The sprawling, shapeless handbag; the little brownish wooly nightgowns that he had liked so much; the stiff blue linen romper Annie had sent him, never worn; the scuffed little shoes. Mary and Josie made cheerful talk of his home-coming, but their mother's expression never altered. Diphtheria—the hospital—her little yellow-headed smiling Marty, who had breakfast with her every morning before the others were up!

Martin meanwhile was in Jim's arms, and even Jim's sturdy self-control was sadly shaken when the little hot confiding head drooped against his cheek and the baby fingers tightened on his own.

It was all a nightmare. Doctor Pocock was gone, there was a closed taxicab at the door, a cab that smelled of wet fabrics and cigar smoke. Josie had warmed a blanket. Marty was loosely balled into a great cocoon. Jim made the dash out into the pitiless clamping cold of the night; Mary heard her mother whispering "Oh, my God!" over and over as she followed.

They had stopped; there was an immense building, cleanly spaciousness, too much light. Doctor Pocock's case; right upstairs; this was Miss Miller. A clean, flat, high bed, shallow bedding turned neatly down. The soft brownish wooly nightgown again, the hot little limbs slipped into it, Marty's thick little plaintive voice, "Gogga!"

An interne was in the room and there was a slim little syringe and the plunge of a cruel needle between the bare babyish shoulders. Marty screamed once, and was still; Jim standing at the window felt the perspiration break out on his forehead, and his knotted hands slippery.

"What'll that do to him?" It was Mrs. Callahan's voice, quiet and controlled.

"We hope it will arrest the course of the disease," the interne said in a low tone. "But it is pretty late—" he confessed,

shaking his head doubtfully. Jim saw his mother drop her head into her hand as she sat in a deep chair, and her lips move.

All a nightmare. Why, only yesterday he had been rolling the sweet potatoes over the kitchen floor—Marty's sheeps. Only the night before that he had had one of his giddy moods; had wanted to jump up and down on the bed in his new night-wear, and kiss Josie good night, and then Mar'wy, and then Dim, and then everybody all over again. And the grown-ups had trooped laughingly in and out of the bedroom, protesting, for a hilarious fifteen minutes!

And now—but it was all a nightmare.

"Maybe," Jim whispered to his mother with shaking lips, "maybe Rose wants him!"

Mrs. Callahan did not answer. Her lips were pressed together, her unseeing eyes fixed blankly ahead.

Marty was not complaining now. Clean, trimly smoothed about him, the bed looked enormous. His flushed little face moved muscularly now and then, but he did not whimper. He made an occasional restless movement with his fair little head.

His foster-mother leaned forward in her chair, stretched a big, gentle, work-hardened hand toward him. But Miss Miller touched her quickly.

"I wouldn't disturb him. He needs every ounce of strength he's got—"

Silence. The older woman dropped her head into her hand again.

Presently there was a little stir at the door and a nurse came smiling in; Jim and his mother looked at her unrecognizingly for a moment and then knew her. It was Miss Walbridge.

But somehow she seemed much prettier, in her white gown and cap, or perhaps the mere sight of a familiar and kindly face gave Mrs. Callahan the sudden friendly warmth that she felt in her heart. Blame them she might, for Marty, betray them she might. But at least she knew them, among all these strangers!

"Well, Mrs. Callahan, I just heard that you were here!" said Miss Walbridge in a friendly low voice. "And my dear little Martin! Bless his little heart, he feels pretty sick, doesn't he? That's the serum, you know—horrid stuff!"

"Oh, he's awful bad!" faltered Mrs. Callahan, clinging to her hand.

Miss Walbridge studied the invalid with an impassive face.

"They go up and down so fast!" she said, unalarmed. "You must take extra good care of this little fellow; Miss Miller, he's a special friend of mine! No, I was only doing a little visiting for a change—I graduated here. I'm on the hall tonight," she went on cheerfully, "and I must go back, but I'll come in every little while."

"I was wondering—if I could stay?" Mrs. Callahan ventured.

"Well, of course you may—right in that chair, if you like. You could get Mrs. Callahan a pillow, Miss Miller. And by the way"—she lowered her voice as she spoke to the other nurse—"have you a respiration tube?"

Jim missed the rest, but the other nurse said thoughtfully: "I can get one."

"Well, I would, I think. Just as well to be prepared." Miss Walbridge again looked down at Marty. "You'll feel much better this time tomorrow night!" she promised him.

Then she was gone, but Jim saw a difference in his mother's manner and felt it himself in the lightened atmosphere. The friendliness, the quiet acceptance of the situation, the suggestion, trivial as it was, to the child himself, all had warmed their hearts. Jim presently felt free to go back to Mary and Josie; his mother quietly kept her place beside the sick child.

The hours dragged by; midnight; one o'clock. At two o'clock Marty had a spasm of choking, and—as in a dream—when it was over, Mrs. Callahan saw the nurse getting the little glass breathing tube ready for the next attack.

"Very hard, these vigils," Miss Walbridge said simply, on one of many visits. "Well, we'll all have a good night's rest tomorrow night!"

Miss Miller had gone upstairs for some coffee; Miss Walbridge had a chair on one side of Marty; his foster-mother had never moved from her position on the other side. The plain, exquisitely clean room was very silent; there was a low wavering light upon the smoothly cemented and curved angles of the white walls. A brighter light came in cubes and squares and oblongs through the window, with the shadows of bare tree branches. The warm atmosphere was faintly scented with ether, with carbolic, with the wooly smell of new blankets. The child lay on his back, breathing sluggishly, now and then whimpering without opening his eyes.

(Continued on page 159)

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VIVIENNE OSBORNE, whose petite comeliness and chic enchantment have graced the stage since she was nine (nine years ago), may be seen in the Cosmopolitan production "The Good Provider."

PROUDLY BY CAMPBELL HUTTON



CLEO MAYFIELD, whose drawling musical voice, rose-charm and real ability make her interpretation of "The Blushing Bride" a real delight to lovers of good comedy.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY FACH BROS.



ANASTASIA REILLY—one of the several charming and piquant reasons
why the Ziegfeld "Follies" is perennially refreshing.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD THAYER MORRIS



GLADYS JORDAN, who understudied Lillian Lorraine, star in "The Blue Kitten," with a pet apropos though not blue.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ISA D. SCHWARTZ



By H. C. WITWER

*A Story that takes
you to the Fountain
of youth—which is Laughter*

The Wages of Cinema

Illustrations by J. W. McGurk

ONCE upon a time Mr. B. Franklin, champion wise cracker of his day, stifled a yawn at a dinner party and coyly remarked to the eye-widenin' flapper on his right:

"Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other."

"Grandpa, you're the bee's knees, for a fact!" the flapper probly says admirin'ly, with a killin' smile. "Speaking of anchovies, how are you coming along with that printing press of yours, or is that the bunk?"

Well, as all this come to pass in 1756, let us leave this ghostly banquet and proceed to the business of the meetin'. What Benjamin Franklin exclaimed about the School of Experience is as true as a handsome farmhand's heart—in a movie—except that all the students ain't fools. Not only does this popular university bar no race, creed, color or age, but attendance there is what you might call compulsory. The yell of the School of Experience is "Never Again!" bawled with the right hand raised, palm out. Walk through the classrooms in the world's best

I have met people
which liked to go
to movin' picture
shows, but this here
Malachi didn't like
to go nowhere else.

J. W. M C G U R K

known college and you'll see squallin' babies learnin' that a constant milk diet is better than nothin' at all, tearful boys and girls findin' out that a broken heart is practically self-healin', and tired old men which have studied it all, displayin' their diplomas in the shape of gray hair and wrinkles while waitin' to say good by to stern Professor Life.

Yes, gently reader, everybody goes to this school—it's always jammed to the doors, yet they's always room. The wise guys study and graduate, the dumbbells can't seem to get out of the kindergarten. Still, fools is useful. A world without fools would be no fun at all—a continuous vaudeville performance made up of nothin' but dramatic sketches—and we'd all walk out on the show. As a matter and fact, we're all a trifle cuckoo over some one thing. Show me a guy one hundred per-cent wise, a bozo which brags he never let wine, woman, money,

success, hate or envy make a fool of him for a time, and I'll show you the boss fool or the boss liar of 'em all!

A fool is far from a total loss, even in the School of Experience. Unable to learn what it's all about himself, why he serves as a livin' text book for brighter scholars. For today's lesson, let's take Malachi Martin—a fool who rushed in where he saw his angel tread.

A couple months ago, or it might of been three, I am sittin' in the parlor of my country estate on Riverside's Drive listenin' to a very static program from Mr. WJK, whilst waitin' for our facsimile of a cook to holler "Come and get it!" After a while I get fed up on bedtime stories where the plot is composed of "So then, my dear children, Willie Pussycat waved his cunning little whiskers and ~~ssssssssssss~~!" So I hung up. I can't understand how it is that the guys which lays out the radio concerts don't seem to realize that now and then a grown person listens in, too. I would of went outside and engaged in some small talk with the hallboys to kill time, only by a strange coincidence these babies is West Indians and it steams me up to have a dinge Ritz me with "I say, there's a topping bit of breeze through the 'all, sir, I fawncy!" and talk about playin' cricket at Van Cortlandt Park instead of Ethiopian dominoes in the basement. A colored gentleman with a Piccadilly Circus dialect is a bit more than I can take!

Well, finally my beauteous chatelaine trips in with the startlin' information that dinner is ready, so we sit down to toy with the festive proteins and the jovial calories. I take one sip of the satire on chicken soup and then I tap my knife lustily against the plate with a right good will. We got a service bell but the cook won't answer it, on the account she says it makes her feel too much like a servant. Finally she sticks her shapely head in the dinin' room door.

"Greetin's!" I says to her politely. "Listen, chef, you made the claim that this was chicken soup and they ain't a particle of chicken in it. How come?"

"What of it?" she scowls. "I got some French fried potatoes, too, but you don't expect 'em to holler 'oo la la' and leap off the plate to kiss you, do you?"

"Ha, ha!" giggles my fair helpmeet across the table. "Laugh that off!"

Violence is prevented by the ringin' of the front door bell. The little woman answers it, because the cook long ago told us that answerin' door bells ain't in her contract. From where I sit I can see right through to the front hall and *what* I see makes

me fit to be tied. A tall, handsome guy is kissin' my wife and he's a complete stranger to me! Likewise, from the way she breaks away from him, *she* never seen him before either. I give him a glare which must of kept him sunburned for a month. Then I get up and brandish my knife at him.

"Take your hands off that lady or I'll smack you down!" I says, courtesy itself. "You big dumbbell, you have got into the wrong apartment!"

"No such thing!" says this clown, settin' down a suitcase inside the door. "My eyes is perfect and I got a wonderful memory for faces. On top of that, I used to make mud pies with this lady and—"

"Well, she's a big girl now and cured of the mud pie habit!" I butt in, approachin' him for no good purpose. "Which way would you like to fall?"

"Say, who are you, interferin' here between me and Dorothy?" says this dizzy cuckoo.

Can you imagine that? Called to account in my own house for buttin' in between a unknown stranger and my own wife! I have often been referred to as the soul of hospitality, but when a unidentified guest blows in from nobody knows and kisses my wife, well—it kind of momentarily annoys me.

"I happen to be the lady's husband!" I says pleasantly. "And unless your name is Dempsey, your next query will be answered by a trained nurse. Let's go!"

With that, I hauled off and hooked him on the jaw. This punch really should of knocked him cold. That's just what it done. Then I stepped over his prostrate body and says to my startled wife in a cold voice:

"Well, what have *you* got to say about this? No stallin' now, answer yes or no!"

I look twice as stern as Gibraltar, but as the matter and fact I am heartbroken. Evidently I have been played false and us only wed ten years! My pulse-quickenin' spouse has been starin' at the study in still life on the floor in bewilderment. Now she slaps her hands together and hollers:

"Why—why, it's Malachi!"

That tells me exactly nothin', but at this critical minute my prey opens his eyes, sits up and stares around a bit nonplussed. The wife helps him to a chair and explanations flies back and forth like seagulls. The handsome stranger breaks down and confesses to bein' a cousin of my wife's from Yaggy, Kansas, and yes they is such a place—I didn't believe it either till I looked it up. In round numbers, his name is Malachi Martin.

We request him to join us at dinner and Malachi says it's mighty neighborly of us to invite him, but about all he can go is a cup of coffee on the account he just eat on the train. Then he pulls his chair up to the table and the panic is on! Malachi clicks off a couple pounds of steak, three or four helpin's of potatoes, peas, eggplant and other vegetables in season, till I could of been arrested for what I'm thinkin' about him and the dumbfounded cook makes a dozen trips to the dinin' room to see Malachi doin' his stuff with her own lustrous orbs.

Followin' the loot of the foodstuffs, Malachi's next imitation is to announce that by birth and inclination he's a plumber. Like all plumbers, he's got a bankroll which would get a polite nod from Morgan and his objects in stealin' into New York is to

go into business in the noted seaport. That tells me all I wish to know about cousin Malachi. I peg him as a fifty-four carat hick which thinks five hundred bucks is money and which will stare the Woolworth Buildin' out of countenance the first time he sees it—a total loss as far as I'm concerned. Besides, with that appetite he's just introduced, he's exactly the kind of a guest I don't crave around my flat for no week-ends. The percentage ain't there, what I mean. So I decided I might as well show Malachi he has failed to enchant me and be done with it.

"Well, Malachi," I says, "I think you made a mistake in bringin' your solder and monkey wrenches to New York with the ideas of settin' up a successful plumbin' parlor. In the first place, lead pipe is at a premium on the account of our hold-up guys havin' first call on the local supply, and in the second place, they's at



Burke, always temperamental, got irritated when Mammal knocks him through the ropes.



Yvette Montgomery is the chief beach beauty—a baby-eyed brunette panic if they ever was one!

least a half-dozen plumbers doin' business here as it is. So if I was you I'd take it on the lam back to dear old Yaggy and——"
"Thank you kindly," butts in Malachi, showin' me two rows

of teeth he must of stole bodily from a toothpowder ad. "Sure is mighty neighborly of you to warn me—but I wan't aimin' to go into the *plumbin'* business here."



"What business was you—eh—aimin' to dash into?" I says. This innocent question seems to upset the sprightly Yaggy plumber. He blushes furiously.

"Eh—I kind of thought I'd look around and—eh—" he stalls. His fair cousin comes to the rescue, quailin' me with a angry look.

"Don't be so inquisitive," she says to me. "Imagine asking such personal questions!" Then she beams on her relative. "Are you married yet, Malachi?"

"Nope," says Malachi, reddenin' up some more. "That's another thing I come to New York for."

"Ain't we got fun?" I says. "Well, you certainly got off at the correct station! Now let's see—you wish to go in business and you crave to get wed. O. K. Now—eh—how much jack have you got to invest in them propositions?"

"Pay no attention to him, Malachi," says the wife. "I have just the girl for you. I'll call her up and have her come over and we'll all—"

"Sure is mighty neighborly of you, cousin," Malachi cuts her off. "But I already got the girl picked out!"

"Who is she?" says one happily married couple, together.

"If you mean what's her name," says Malachi, "that's somethin' I don't know! I've never met her. I know she's in New York and that's all!"

I glance at my bride over Malachi's shoulder and tap my forehead, meanin' that she's got at least one cousin which is a achin' void from the neck up. She looks at Malachi, puzzled.

"Well, Malachi," I says, "that description's ample for me. I'll have that girl here for you tomorrow night! But about this business you're goin' in; if you got, say, ten thousand bucks to invest, I can put you wise to a graft which will make you laugh your head off every time you think of how you used to solder bath-tubs!"

"I got twenty-five thousand to invest!" says Malachi.

With the greatest of difficulty I refrained from kissin' him! My wife gives me a proud look which silently says, "I shake a mean cousin, what?"

"Malachi," I says to the Yaggy millionaire, "it was certainly a lucky day for me—eh—for you, when you decided to see for yourself the souvenir post cards of New York liars! I have decided to sell you a interest in Chloroform Eddie Burke for your

"I happen to be the lady's husband!" I says and give him a punch which should of knocked him cold. That's just what it done.

twenty-five thousand berries. There—don't try to thank me now, just—"

"Who's Chloroform Eddie Burke?" interrupts Malachi.

"Why, Malachi!" I says, with the greatest of surprise. "You might just as well ask who's Charlie Chaplin! At present, Chloroform Eddie Burke is heavyweight champion of Baffin's Bay. Within the next two years he'll be heavyweight champion of the world, or else—"

"Or else he won't!" butts in the little woman scornfully. "Why waste Malachi's time with this apple sauce? Malachi's not interested in that synthetic boxer of yours; what does a plumber know about prizefighting? Now there's a beauty parlor around the corner on Broadway that's really a gold mine! I've had my eye on it for some time and with Malachi's twenty-five thousand—"

"Folks, just a minute!" says Malachi. "Sure is mighty neighborly of you to be interested in me makin' a proper investment with my money. But the fact of the matter is, I've already picked out the business I'm goin' into in your entertainin' city."

I think I got Malachi pegged this time, for a fact!

"Bootleggin', hey?" I says. The wife gasps.

"Cousin," says Malachi, "they ain't no use to question me till I find out a few certain things for myself—then I'll tell you all about everything. Before I go in this business I got in mind, I got to find this girl! What the business is I can't say as yet, except that it ain't plumbin' and it ain't bootleggin', but they's mighty big money in it!"

"I think you been give a bum steer, Malachi," I says. "In Yaggy it may be different, but in New York they is few grafts which can compete with plumbin' and bootleggin' in the matter of profits!"

"Well, suppose we quit arguin'," says Malachi with a good natured grin. "I sure enjoyed that little snack of food I had and I feel like I ought to do somethin' to show my appreciation. Let's all go to a movie, on me!"

The big stiff! If he had really wanted to do somethin' to show his appreciation of that one-man banquet he give himself at my table, he would of took us to Europe! However, I ain't give up hope of glommin' that twenty-five grand yet and I ain't goin' to quit to no goofy plumber, cousin or no.

"Listen, Malachi," I says with a bewitchin' smile. "Let's leave the movies alone tonight. I got a better thought than that. Before you make a final decision about bustin' head first into that mysterious business you got in mind, at least do me the favor to take a peep at Chloroform Eddie Burke. Once you see this baby do his stuff you'll agree with me that he's the eagle's hips, no foolin'! He boxes Murderous Mammal in Newark tonight and he'll slap him for a mock turtle as sure as the Atlantic is moist!"

"Thank you kindly," says Malachi, gettin' up. He coats and hats himself. "I got my mind all made up about the business

I'm goin' into and they's nothin' can change it. I don't care much about prizefights, either, but it's sure mighty neighborly of you to take me."

"Not at all, Malachi," I says, grittin' my teeth. "It's sure mighty neighborly of you to go!"

Well, me and Malachi makes the dread voyage to the land of Newark without nothin' happenin' worthy of puttin' in the log, except that every few minutes Malachi wishes aloud that we had went to the movies. When he ain't doin' that he's pullin' that gag line of his, "Sure is mighty neighborly of you!" till I am fit to be tied, my feelin's for Malachi bein' far from neighborly and that's a fact! When we get to the abbatoir where Chloroform Burke and Murderous Mammal is to half kill each other, I plant the Twenty-Five Thousand Dollar Kid in a seat beside me so close to the ring that we got to pull our knees up to let 'em ring the bell. I figure that before the end of the third round I will have Malachi's twenty-five grand safely tucked away in exchange for a half interest in Chloroform Eddie Burke. I have told Eddie, which always was a money fighter, just what depends on him puttin' up a gilt-edged brand of assault and battery with his charmin' adversus and all I'm hopin' is that cousin Malachi won't yell his head off with simple delight and maybe disgrace me.

Before the old cow bell rings out to start the boys on this cold-blooded ruination of each other, I was the bit nervous for fear a ten-round draw they had fought six months previous had give 'em so much respect for each other's punches that the thing would develop into a mere prizefight instead of another Gettysburg. But the first round alone—all Malachi seen—quieted my foolish fears. Chloroform Burke and Murderous Mammal attacked each other like a pair of starved collies over a ham bone. Burke's openin' remark was to put Mammal on his ear with a torrid right to the head. Mammal's witty retort to this was a uppercut which sprawled Burke on his gleamin' shoulder blades. Then the fun waxed fast and furious! Both socked each other with everything but the club's license and in less than a minute the ten thousand customers was ten thousand howlin' lunatics from watchin' this set of two-fisted idiots make each other love it. Then Burke, always temperamental, got irritated when by a strange coincidence Mammal knocks him through the ropes on top of the reporters with a barbarous gesture to the heart. Burke climbed back to the rostrum and begins playin' the Beal

Street Blues on Mammal's amazed tummy with both hands. With a minute to go in the first round, Mammal looks like he fell out of a well and it seems the only way Burke can lose is if the referee cracks him over the head with a belayin' pin. Nobody in the place is sittin' down, unless you want to count when Burke hits Mammal.

In the midst of all this panic, it strikes me that I ain't hearin' the returns yet from cousin Malachi Martin, the Yaggy money king. Swingin' around, I look at him and I like to swoon away in a faint! I would of cooked this clown for three dimes and one could of been Canadian, no foolin'. Everybody in that club house is havin' the time of their life, outside of Murderous Mammal and Malachi Martin! Unable to cope with Chloroform Eddie Burke, Mammal is leanin' on the ropes all set for a prominent place in "Who's Through in America," whilst Malachi, with his fingers in his ears to keep out the red-blooded plaudits of

the mob, is scrunched down in his seat the picture of unhappiness. This egg ain't gettin' no more kick out of the two-man Chateau Thierry in front of him than a guy in prison would get a kick out of a dress suit. To get right down to it, them two heavies could of been playin' golf in there for all Malachi knows, because he ain't even lookin' at the ring! I crave to choke him, but I just shook him.

"What's the idea?" I beller in his ear.

"Ain't them two young men carryin' on smartly enough for your exactin' taste?"

Malachi throws a sarcastical glance up at the two cave men which has even got the hard boiled referee panic-stricken tryin' to keep from bein' nailed himself.

"I could lick the both of them," he says. "And should I of paid any money for this seat, I'd sure get up there and do it! Why don't they make 'em fight?"

This sends me right up in flames, but thinkin' of that twenty-five thousand, I grit my teeth and take up on my temper.

"That's just the first round, Malachi," I says, as the bell rings and the hysterical mob falls back on the seats. "In the next frame, they each come out with a ax in one hand and a crowbar in the other. I fixed that for your special benefit, knowin' you like a little horse-play mixed in with your fights!"

I expect this will steam Malachi up a bit and I look for somethin' snappy in the line of retorts discourteous. Nothin' stirrin'. If the gentleman from Yaggy thought he was bein' kidded, he don't show it facially.

"Thank you kindly, cousin," he says.

"Sure is mighty neighborly of you to go to all that trouble, but as a matter of fact I'm goin' across the street to a movie. That's where I should of went to begin with! On the way in here I noticed they're showin' a Mirthless Comedy feature in that theater and they's just a chance that this picture may mean the end of the search which bring me all the ways to New York. I've saw sixty-five of 'em already, tryin' to find out one thing!"

I am now convinced past all argument that my wife is cousin to a first-class maniac. As he starts to push his way out the crowded aisle, I grab his arm.

"What's the one thing you been tryin' to find out?" I says.

"Where they show the next one!" says cousin Malachi. "I'll meet you outside of here after your very interestin' fight is over."

"Thank you kindly, cousin," I snarls.

"That's sure mighty neighborly of you!" But he's gone. (Continued on page 146)



The wife's girl friends got tired of seeing "Mirthless Comedies" with this cuckoo yokel.

CYNTHIA STOCKLEY'S PONJOLA

Illustrations by Herbert M. Stoops



A Résumé of Parts One and Two:

BY a freak of fate, as a young woman is waiting on a Paris street corner for a cab to take her to the Seine, where she intends to commit suicide, a strange man good naturedly offers her a lift.

The stranger's car breaks down and the two seek shelter from the rain in a nearby restaurant. There she learns that he is a Rhodesian gold miner on his way back to Africa to marry the girl he loves. When, fascinated by his description of the country, she suggests visiting the veldt herself, he tells her emphatically that it would be no place for an unprotected girl.

His charm, his buoyant, wholesome happiness give her a new grip on life, and when they part a great plan has replaced her suicidal mood. He calls out that if she should ever come to Africa she must look up his wife and himself in Wankelo, but he has not mentioned his name . . .

A year later a young man by the name of Desmond, apparently an artist and writer, is on his way to Africa. On the ship he meets several Rhodesians, including Mrs. Hope, Loochia Love-a-little-Luff—whose hatred he incurs by amusedly resisting her attempts to "vamp" him—and Gaynor Lypiatt, whom he especially likes. Everyone is attracted by young Desmond despite his great reserve, obviously concealing a mystery; for he has youth and charm and debonair, comradely ways, though he is also sharp-tongued.

Desmond observes that Gaynor becomes steadily more depressed as she nears home. Arriving, she is met and whisked off by her husband Constant, whom Desmond instinctively dislikes and sizes up as a cold man with a passion.

At the port Desmond meets Sherry and the Count and has his first taste of easy-going African ways as well as of the grip of ponjola, or drink, on the men. The Count offers him a job as "secretary" at the Oof-Bird, Lypiatt's new mine for which everyone predicts disaster. While he is alone in his room Desmond carefully puts some artificial tan on his cheeks and pencils his mustache.

He is surprised to find that all his new friends are from Wankelo. On the train there, he expresses to Sherry his disgust at the African drinking habit and says he once knew a Rhodesian who didn't drink and was buoyantly, wholesomely happy. Sherry promptly cites as an example of Africa's ruthless ways his friend Druro, who had returned from Europe to find his fiancée married to another man, his mine "gone bust," everything smashed; and

THE story takes place in and about Wankelo, Rhodesia, South Africa. The principal characters are:

AN UNNAMED WOMAN, young, boyish, fascinating and wealthy, who lives in the artists' quarter of Paris.

GAYNOR LYPIATT, pretty, charming in an ethereal way, recently married to Constant Lypiatt.

MRS. ERIC (LOOCHIA) LUFF, cattish, with "vamping" tendencies.

MRS. HOPE, who runs the Selukine hospital near Wankelo.

"YOUNG" DESMOND, debonair, handsome, brilliant, the best of pals, whose past is a mystery and who has come to Africa to witness a happiness he cannot share.

FRANCIS LUNDI DRURO, man's man, fearless, charming, rapidly going to the devil through "ponjola," or drink.

CONSTANT LYPIATT, a hard, unscrupulous and successful gold miner.

SHERIDAN, "Champagne Sherry," a happy-go-lucky, hard drinking dare-devil who "manages" Druro's run-down farm.

COUNT VON BLAUHIMMEL, "The Count," hail-fellow-well-met, manager of Lypiatt's mine, the Oof-Bird.

ERIC LUFF, good-for-nothing gambler and miner.

Y'S
A

Romance of the Dark Woman's Fight for

Continent and a a Man's Soul



Late afternoon saw the arrival of Druro astride a mule, more haggard than usual, his eyes more achingly blue.

who, like the rest, was drowning his cares in drink so deeply that he was called the "ponjola king."

At Wankelo Desmond meets Druro himself. He is shocked by the man's condition; eyes red-rimmed with drink, clothes unkempt, an utter abandonment to despair—yet underneath the gleam of an unconquerable charm. When Druro asks vaguely if he hasn't met Desmond somewhere before the latter brusquely turns the question aside.

That evening, while Druro is busy drinking, Desmond is startled to learn by way of gossip that the woman who had thrown him over was Gaynor Liscannon, who had suddenly married Constant Lypiatt just before her fiancée arrived from Europe. A quick hatred for the girl is born in Desmond's heart.

Subsequently his knowledge of mining, the veldt and the people is enlarged by a stag party held ostensibly to get the Count "off the booze," but really as an excuse for a drinking bout; and by a trek into the veldt with Sherry and Druro, who are prospecting for a new mine. Away from drink, he finds them delightful companions, and his affection for Druro increases. Druro unconsciously shows his real nature when he is stirred to the depths one night by the music from Desmond's violin.

When the rainy season begins Desmond goes to the Oof-Bird as secretary but finds that his duties are mostly odd jobs. Lypiatt visits the mine occasionally, always laden with a mysterious heavy suitcase; and Desmond, who dislikes him heartily, at these times makes himself scarce. One day, however, Gaynor comes with her husband and unfortunately Druro appears too. His eyes as he sees Gaynor are more achingly blue than ever and Desmond's hatred for her deepens.

When she has gone Desmond and Druro talk and the latter casually described a favorite African way of committing suicide by taking cyanide on top of whisky, going to sleep and "waking up dead." The conversation sticks strangely in Desmond's mind.

Part Three: CHAPTER VII

AN OCCASIONAL visitor to the mine was Eric Luff, though whom he came to see was not clear. Everyone disclaimed the honor and the only person who gave him welcome was Constant Lypiatt when he hap-

pened to be there.

Desmond, who detested him only a shade less than Lypiatt, sometimes wondered what it was the two had in common. Lypiatt was far too clever to find interest in Luff's drink-sodden brain, and it was impossible to suppose any one could like the fellow. Probably the lesser man served as some kind of tool to the greater, and a scrap of conversation Desmond overheard one day rather confirmed the impression.

"A pub is the thing," Lypiatt was saying. "That's the way to cook him. Get busy at once and don't waste time."

The words did not interest Desmond much, except because they were spoken in the way a brutal man might speak to a dog when giving it a kick.

"All right," Luff assented readily, and Desmond heard no more. But the incident had a curious echo some days later.

He and Druro were riding into Wankelo when the latter announced his intention of stopping at Luff's mine, the Bang-up. It lay a little off the main road about four miles from town.

"Luff's shutting down and I told him I'd have a look at the property and see if it's any good to me."

"But you've got the Arabella," objected Desmond. "What do you want with two?"

"Arabella's no good. I must get something else soon, and as Luff's not much of a hand at mining he may possibly be mistaken in this place."

Arrived at the mine Druro went straight to Luff's office, evading the invitation of Loochia to a cup of tea. It was a hot afternoon and Desmond at least was glad to accept the invitation and follow her to the dwelling house at the back of an iron building that had once been a store.

It was no surprise to find everything very cozy in Love-a-little's sitting room. Her knowledge of life and men had taught her to make a pretty and comfortable environment for herself



"What in Latin and Greek has come to this mine?" demanded Lypiatt in terrible wrath.

wherever she went. There was no plethora of ornaments or drapery; just several very comfortable chairs, a vase of bright flowers, some books and a cottage piano. Whether Loochia had really been playing from the volume of Bach which stood open at one of the most difficult fugues was a question Desmond did not pursue. Her tea was good; and that was more than could be said for her temper. Druro's refusal had clearly annoyed her, though she pretended that her annoyance was at Desmond's long delay in coming to call. A wonderful array of homemade cakes and scones decorated the tea table—almost as though she had expected a visitor, though it couldn't have been Desmond, his call being quite unpremeditated. The hands of Loochia were evidently capable as well as pretty, for she related that she had made everything herself. Being in confidential mood, she poured out her woes as well as the tea. The mine had gone "phut," they owed pots of money and worst of all her husband was now about to disgrace her by turning the place into a wayside hotel.

"He calls it that," she said, "but I know what it amounts to—a common pub with a bar in it for men to stop and drink at! What do you think of it, Mr. Desmond?"

Desmond did not quite know what to think of it. He could only wonder curiously who was going to be "cooked" in the pub to be opened at Lypiatt's instigation. Meantime he temporized.

"It doesn't seem to matter much what you do to make a living in Rhodesia. No one minds as long as you're good company."

"That's all very well, but *shall* we make a living? Eric will drink as much as he sells. I'm sick of it," she muttered in sudden temper. "Sick of his incompetence and miserable potterings. Nothing but money going down the spout and never a penny to spend on anything jolly." She cried a little at this juncture and Desmond felt nervous for her eyelashes.

"Very bad luck!" he murmured.

"I wonder why some women get the fools," she said plain-

tively, "while others have the pick of brains and looks and everything that's going."

"Unaccountable," said Desmond and began to look bored. "No—not unaccountable. It's just luck and where you happen to be when you are of marrying age. I was stuck away in an English village and had to take Eric Luff or nothing. Ah! If I had been out here! They get chances, the girls out here. Look at Gaynor Lypiatt. Neither cleverer nor better looking than I am. Yet she could have had Lundi Druro as well as Constant Lypiatt."

"As well? Surely not—even in Rhodesia?"

"Don't be silly. You know very well what I mean. As it is, Con Lypiatt will probably wind up as a millionaire. But Druro had the makings of something big in him too."

"Ah! You think so?"

"Of course. People sneer at him now, but it was only after Gaynor Liscannon threw him over that he went to bits. Before that—well, he could have done anything in Rhodesia. There was nothing that wasn't open to him. Even now—if he would pull up . . . and with the right woman— Give me a cigarette," she said, and her voice was trembling. But by the time she had lighted up she was perfectly calm and the subject had changed to the matter of a coolie tailor in Wankelo who had the presumption to be dunning her for the price of a riding habit.

It was a relief to both when Druro's whistle sounded outside.

"Hurry up, Desmond! Pressing business in town."

Mrs. Luff came out and stood by their horses.

"You are a very unfriendly person, Lundi Druro," she crooned. "I particularly wanted you to try my scones. It's not much fun making things if no one ever comes to eat them!"

("Evidently I am no one," thought Desmond.)

"Very kind of you, Mrs. Luff," mumbled Druro. "If only I hadn't such a lot to do in town—"

"Oh, you always say that. But you should remember there are other friends who like to see you sometimes as well as those at the club."

"I shall drop in next time," Druro averred. "A sporting

little woman," he remarked as they rode off. "Pretty tough luck for her being tied up to that rotter."

"So she seems to think," said Desmond, and Druro's expression changed.

"Ah! She's like the rest of them, then!"

"And what are the rest of them like?"

"Disloyal as hell."

It was left at that. "Luff can have his mine anyway," remarked Druro when he had cantered off his spleen. "It's no good."

"I understand from his wife that he will shortly be opening a pub on the scene of his unsuccessful exploit."

"Hurray! That's glad tidings! He'll be doing some good in the world at last. It has always been too far between drinks from the Oof-Bird to Wankelo. And talking about drinks, are you coming into the club?"

"No thanks. I'll join you later," said Desmond, "when you've finished your pressing business."

Within a week the Bang-up had started its bright career as a resort for weary travelers. Desmond was often there. He did not much care for the atmosphere of bars, but in the matter of pursuing a certain course of action he made shift to put up with the reek of spirits and language he did not like. He had many friends, too, among the mining crowd, and since it gave them pleasure to have him among them drinking lemonade whilst they pow-wow'd about the wonderful things their mines were going to do, it would have seemed churlish not to oblige. His chief interest, however, was in keeping an eye on Lundi Druro, who, as naturally as breathing, had become one of the regular sources of the Luff income. Even as his libation at Wankelo had helped to erect the Falcon Hotel, so he threw himself fearlessly into the building business at the Bang-up. No longer did Loochia need to complain of his pressing affairs at Wankelo. Her only cause for discontent was that he had Desmond always with him; but she never voiced it.

She had taken to being so very purry and pretty when Druro was around, and Desmond didn't like it. He began to wonder, as a choice of two evils, whether Eric in the bar could be worse for the mortal body than Loochia in the sitting room for the immortal soul. She was the mistress of quite a number of arts, not the least being that of creating about her an atmosphere of hominess very attractive to lonely men. That she had succeeded in breaking through Druro's rule against women's society gave proof enough of her charm. But she was not so clever that she had been able to eliminate Desmond from the picture yet. As she remarked to him one day, with a curl of her lip:

"David and Jonathan were not in it with you two."

"Jonathan was better for David's soul than Bathsheba, if I remember rightly," Jonathan

pleasantly responded, Druro's attention being at the moment engaged elsewhere. Loochia looked at the speaker with such absorbed thoughtfulness as might have filled the eyes of Lucrezia Borgia when inwardly tabulating her stock of poisons.

Luff was not so subtle as Loochia. He hated Desmond without being clever enough to conceal it. Desmond preferred it that way, his sentiment for Luff being that which he would have felt for an unpleasant spider. But Desmond was Druro's pal and the hotel keeper could not afford to offend so good a patron as Druro. Besides, Luff was not distinguished for personal courage, as Desmond had early discovered. No chance of getting a head punched from that quarter.

Luff had one or two peculiarities, physical and otherwise, which intrigued public curiosity and, prompted by Desmond, discussion often arose as to what kind of duel it was in which he had acquired his gamey leg. (Report stated that an ugly Dutchman with a pretty wife had been the cause of this distinction, but details had never been properly filled in.) Then, curiosity would be expressed as to why he should keep his mouth under a long, drooping mustache—concealed, like his good points.

Desmond tried to make dear Eric talk about these things and everyone saw the poetic justice of it except two persons—Eric, chewing his long mustache and grinning like a puff adder—and Druro. The latter for some reason did not think the game amusing, and took it upon himself to tell Desmond so. He considered it was as unsporting to bait Luff as to tease a chained up monkey.

"Why don't you let up on him?" he inquired brusquely one day as they rode away. Desmond answered as brusquely:

"Because he's a rotter."

Druro, silent for a space, looked thoughtfully at his companion. At last he said:

"I've been in Africa some twenty years, Desmond, and nothing amazes me any more. I am accustomed to discovering potmen by birth in the places of potentates, and men of birth following the profession of potmen. But I have been unable to place you."

"I was destined for the church," sneered Desmond. "But something seems to have gone wrong with the plan of my career even as with yours. Anything else you'd like to know?"

"I sometimes wonder how your nose got broken."

"Go to the devil."

"I'm not saying there isn't a certain cachet about you," continued Druro, undisturbed. "You're deuced good-looking, and your damned insolence is not dislikable when one isn't the subject of it. But about some things you see squintwise mentally as well as physically, and you have bad lapses from the standard of an English public schoolboy."

"Who are you, I'd like to know, to talk about standards?" said Desmond in a rage.

"Who indeed? But we happen to be discussing your baiting of Luff."

"Oh, are we? It sounded to me more like a soapy sermon by your precious uncle the Reverend Francis." That too left Druro's withers unwrung. He went on calmly:

"Admitting that he's a rotter—to a good many of us that sweet epithet is equally apropos. Why not try it on someone less averse to physical retaliation than Luff?"



Loochia gave Desmond a baleful glance, but for Druro her voice was honey.



"One o'clock, Druro!" cried Desmond. Mrs. Luff spoke mockingly. "I'm afraid you do not care to face the five

"So that's what you're hinting at?" said Desmond, growing calm in turn but with eyes ablaze. "Let me tell you that I find the implication extremely offensive."

"Not nearly so offensive as you are to Luff."

"Luff has the skin of a rhino and the soul of a skunk. It is impossible to insult him. I advise you, however, that I am differently composed. The boyish, beautiful face had become bloodless. Druro seemed both pleased and amused.

"Don't be a fool, Desmond," he said cheerfully. "It is only that I don't like to see you step down into the ditch, even for the purpose of kicking a skunk."

But Desmond, not to be appeased, flamed out at him.

"I'm not going to stand any of your cheek. Just remember that. Also, if you didn't frequent ditches I should have no occasion to do any kicking." With that he galloped off.

Unfortunately he could not feel that he had got the best of the argument. *Certainly* he baited Luff, but he had a reason for doing it and had secretly hoped that Druro would back him up. For if he could manage to precipitate a quarrel between Druro and Loochia's husband, it would put a stop to the frequenting of the Bang-up. Not only had this little plan failed, however, but he, Desmond, with the blood of soldiers in his veins, had been practically accused of cowardice to boot! That was not

very palatable fare to his pride. In fact, it made him feel like murder.

Since he was not able to kill Druro, or even fight him, he "sent him to Coventry" instead. Druro realizing this, stopped calling at the camp for a while, doubtless—thought Desmond angrily—because he intended to visit "the ditch" en route. When at last he did call he was met with reprisal and the information that Desmond had gone fishing with the Count.

So Druro went alone, walked in the ditch very industriously and, proceeding later to Wankelo, got delectably drunk and lost fifty pounds at poker. Desmond heard all about it a few days later when he drove out to pay the long promised visit to Sherry on Druro's farm in the Sombwelo forest.

A fire had swept across the forest leaving black devastation behind it. Only a few patches of grass showed bleached and meager, and it was pitiful to see the emaciated cattle nosing vainly for the wherewithal to live. Away on the landscape a bilious blotch represented the mealie-crop, stricken by blight. Nearer the house the orchard, consisting of a thousand fruit trees—brought at some expense from down country—shriveled and blistered in the heat. Flowerbeds, laid out at some more prosperous time, contained nothing in them now except stones. A strip

having pinned their last hopes and dollars to a lost reef—and a reef that remained lost—were on the verge of bankruptcy. They had just managed to pay off their boys, and that left them nothing in the world but a mass of expensive machinery which they had erected on various mines and which now represented so much useless litter—unless someone would buy it! But no one was buying anything at this time. A slump in gold mines had set in with the suddenness of an epidemic.

True, small properties with light expenses could always keep going, and a certain number still carried on gaily, seemingly unaffected by the slump. In the Wankelo district Constant Lypiatt's Agate was one of these, and the little Oof-Bird, too, kept her end up, rattling away and turning out her 230 ounces a month to testify that she was not the "dud" she had been labeled.

Desmond on his return found the Count looking ill and shaky, more fit for bed than superintending a mine. He explained that he had a go of fever, but an experienced eye would have recognized him as a man on the verge of delirium tremens.

"You ought to go to bed and take care of yourself," urged Desmond. "Let the mine look after itself for a bit. McFadden and Jimmie will keep it from red ruin."

But the Count mumbled and shook his head. "I've got a plan. Lundi Druro is on his uppers and will be glad of a job so I've sent for him to come out and take over."

Desmond stared at the blue-lipped shaking optimist. Lundi Druro work for Constant Lypiatt! Druro would stay on his uppers until they wore through first if Desmond knew anything.

But it appeared that Desmond knew nothing at all, for late afternoon saw the arrival of Druro, trailing his long legs on either side of a mule's fat belly, with two niggers behind carrying his bundles.

He was a little more ragged than usual about the trousers and a good deal more haggard than usual about the cheeks. His eyes were more achingly blue and more deeply encompassed with blood, but his shirt was clean and fresh as hawthorn petals, and the gaiety of his smile reached Desmond like a knife under the fifth rib.

"The Count is in his hut," he said abruptly and turned away. But Druro remained in Desmond's doorway, hands in ragged pockets.

"I suppose you think I've come here because I like it?"

"I don't care what you have come for."

(Continued on page 130)



miles alone, Mr. Desmond."

of veldt leveled for a tennis court was decorated with a stack of old bottles.

Over the tea, which was strong as death and black as Satan's heart, since all the cows not dead were dry, Sherry lugubriously explained why his efforts at farming had not been blessed with prosperity. There was no luck about the place, he fatalistically proclaimed. The outlook at Sombwelo Vlei seemed as black as the veldt outside.

The next news on the tape stated that the Arabella had closed down and the murder was out that Druro and Emma Guthrie,



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For He's A Jolly Good Fellow B

Some Host!

Play in Three Acts

CHARACTERS

TOM COOPER, the host.
GEORGE WILLIS, a guest
HARRY WALL, a guest.
Five other male guests.
MARGARET, the maid.
MRS. KANE, who "helps out" at parties.

Illustrations by
H. B. Eddy

ACT II.

Kitchen in Cooper's home. Margaret and Mrs. Kane.

MRS. KANE: Where's the missus?

MARGARET: She's in Harrisburg, visitin' her mother.

MRS. KANE: Been away a long w'ile, ain't she?

MARGARET: Pretty near two mont's.

MRS. KANE: Nothin' wrong, is they?

MARGARET: No. That is, they ain't been no misunderstandin'. But I think she's doin' it so as to save expense till he kind of gets back on his feet. You know business ain't been so good.

MRS. KANE: And how about you, Margaret?

MARGARET: Me? I'm all right, I guess.

MRS. KANE: And how's your little girl?

MARGARET (brokenly): Oh, I guess you didn't hear! I lost her.

MRS. KANE: Lost her!

MARGARET: Yes, a week ago today.

MRS. KANE: What was the matter?

MARGARET: Well, you know since Mike got hurt she's been helpin' us out, earnin' a little money. Mrs. Klepper, that lives up the street from us, she does washin' for four families in Kensington, and Mame, she went and got the washin' and took it back. Well, a week ago Monday she was out in that storm and caught a cold, but she didn't tell her pa nothin' about it as she was scared he would maybe be worried and make her stay home. She went out again a-Tuesday mornin', but she felt so bad that afternoon that she had to give up. And two days later she was gone. Pneumonia, I guess.

MRS. KANE: Did the doctor say it was?

MARGARET: We didn't have no doctor. You see, we owe Doctor Campbell over two hundred dollars for Mike and we kind of hated to bother him. And we thought it was just a cold and she'd get over it; that is, Mike thought so. I didn't know nothin' about it.

MRS. KANE: You didn't know!

MARGARET: No. Mike couldn't get out himself and couldn't find no one to send. Not till she was dead.

MRS. KANE: You poor dear!

MARGARET: And it'll be Mike next. The doctor said he ought to be took away somewheres, but I ain't got the money to send him.

MRS. KANE: Why don't you ask Mr. Cooper? He'd advance you enough.

MARGARET: Advance? Say—

MRS. KANE: Well, what?

MARGARET: Well, I wasn't goin' to tel nobody, but I know you're all right. He owes me my pay for mont's and mont's. He owes me eight hundred and forty dollars.

ACT III.

Wall's roadster. Wall and Willis are on their way home.

WILLIS: Well, that was some party!

WALL: I'll say so! And profitable for me.

WILLIS: What did you win?

WALL: Just under a hundred bucks.

WILLIS: And Cooper lost a hundred and forty.

WALL: Yes, and he lost another hundred night before last, to say nothing of six hundred yesterday, out to the track.

WILLIS: That's—let's see—that's eight hundred and forty in three days. No nourishment in that!

WALL: No, but he's a mighty good loser.

WILLIS: He certainly is! Why, when he said good night he was all smiles.

WALL: And he's some host, too!

WILLIS: Some host is right!



ACT I.

Living room in Cooper's home. Cooper and the guests have finished dinner and started two bridge games.

WILLIS: How about two and a half cents

WALL: Oh, a penny's enough!

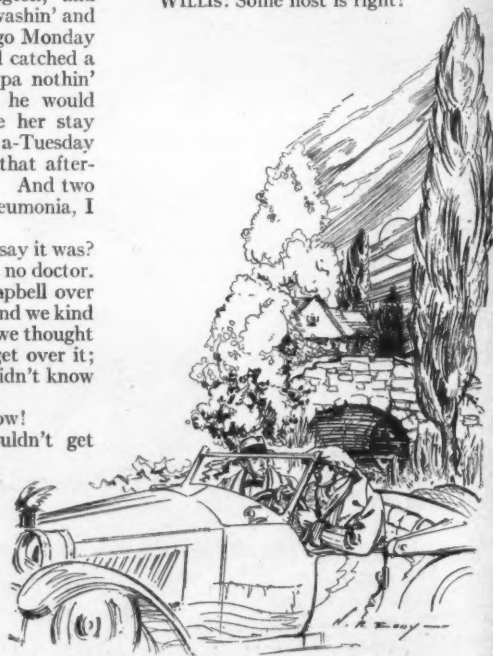
COOPER: Oh, loosen up, Harry! That's no game! Let's make it a nickel.

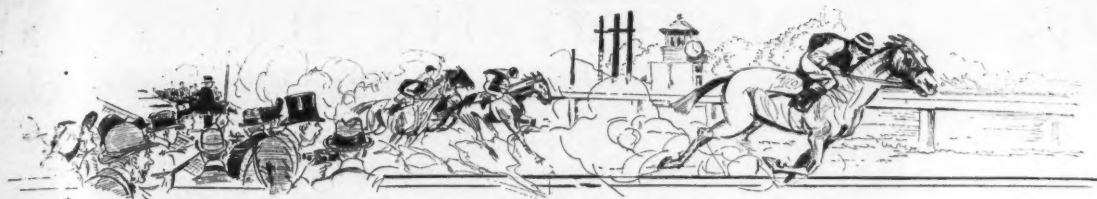
WILLIS: You must feel lucky.

COOPER: And, how about some more of that cordial?

WALL: You oughtn't to drink that all up in one night. I priced that stuff and I know what it costs.

COOPER: Sure, it costs. But I didn't buy it to keep.





B Y R I N G W. L A R D N E R

He Who Never Loses Play in Two Acts

CHARACTERS.

JACK AUSTIN—Just One of Us.

CHARLIE CARPENTER—A Wise One

ACT I.

Clubhouse at the Aqueduct Race Track, after the first race.

CARPENTER: Hello there, Austin.

AUSTIN: Hello.

CARPENTER: I didn't know you was a racing fan.

AUSTIN: I ain't. I only come once in a while.

CARPENTER: I been out every day.

AUSTIN: It's all right if you can afford it.

CARPENTER: Afford it! Say, I couldn't afford to stay away from it. I'm way ahead of them.

AUSTIN: You're lucky.

CARPENTER: It ain't all luck, boy. It's knowing what you're doing. You don't see no sappadolas beating them.

AUSTIN: I guess that's right.

CARPENTER: Did you beat the first race?

AUSTIN: I wasn't here. I just got here.

CARPENTER: Cum Sah win it. I had him on the nose. Two hundred smackers. And I got five to one.

AUSTIN: That's a good start.

CARPENTER: It's going to be a good day.

AUSTIN: Who do you like in the big race?

CARPENTER: Oh, that's in! Them dogs can't beat Morvich.

AUSTIN: Morvich is giving away a lot of weight.

CARPENTER: He could beat them hounds with a grand piano on his back.

AUSTIN: He'll be a short price.

CARPENTER: He'll be odds-on. But whatever he is, he's just like a government bond. You can go for the furniture on that baby!

ACT II.

Same scene between the fourth and fifth races.

CARPENTER: Well, that was a great race!

AUSTIN: Great for the boys that guessed right.

CARPENTER: Didn't you have him?

AUSTIN: Have who?

CARPENTER: Why, the winner, Whiskaway.

AUSTIN: Not me! My fifty bucks went on Morvich.

CARPENTER: Morvich! Why, hell! That's too bad!

AUSTIN: Wasn't you on him?

CARPENTER: Morvich? Me? Not at them weights!

AUSTIN: Was you on Whiskaway?

CARPENTER: Sure! Who wouldn't be! Ain't no horse living can give that baby fourteen pounds! And that price! Two and a half to one! I feel just like I'd stole twenty-five hundred dollars.

AUSTIN: Well, I wished I'd knew!

CARPENTER: I wished I'd of saw you!

Bright Sayings of the Children

THE sum of one dollar will be paid for each "Bright Saying" considered good enough for publication in this department. The contest is limited to my children.

DAVID (aged three): That's a funny train.

MISS FELDMAN: It's a freight.

DAVID: What's it a freight of?

JOHN (aged ten): Well, the cat has got mother's record tied. They've both got four children. The only difference is that the cat's an old maid.



Bright Sayings of the Old People

EARLY this summer a show called "The Pinwheel" opened in New York. It didn't exactly knock the audience out of their seats and the critics rode it, you

might say. A week or so after its opening, Percy Hammond of the New York Tribune asked us if we'd seen it.



"Just in rehearsal," says we. "Oh!" says Percy. "Did they have a rehearsal?"

For the Housewife

THIS department is devoted to helpful hints on running the home. The editor will gladly publish queries of general interest and replies to same.

A young matron of Flint, Michigan, has hit upon a novel idea which is bound to win her the undying gratitude of young mothers all over the country. The matron referred to recently had her first child, a boy. She wished to name him after the father, but was afraid that with two Wallies in the house there would be great confusion. She finally hit upon the scheme of having the boy christened Walter, after the father, but calling him, not Walter or Wallie, but Junior.

Other Flint ladies are said to have gone cuckoo over the idea and can hardly wait till they have another son, whom, you may be pretty sure, they will name for his father, but call Junior.

"Next month," writes "Bride," of Hudson, Mass., "my husband will celebrate his birthday, the first he has had since we were married. What can I give him? He shaves himself, but does not drink or smoke."

No other gift is so welcome to a man, especially a man who shaves or washes himself, as a paper towel.



UNFINISHED

The Setting:

ON THE Place Lubianka in Moscow there is a building several stories higher than the surrounding houses. It projects out into the square in an aggressive point, its rococo façade forming a sharp contrast to the old-fashioned Russian buildings that flank it. Surmounting it is an imposing clock tower; underneath is the inscription "Russia Life Insurance Company." Over the ground floor entrance is a temporary sign in large red letters, "Commissariat of the Interior"—the Soviet Home Office.

The side door at Number 2 Lubianka was formerly the entrance and exit for the employees of the company; today it is the entrance to the prison of the Special Section of the Extraordinary Commission, known to all Russians as the "Cheka," which deals with cases of espionage and counter-revolution. Only the most serious cases are handled by the Special Section; consequently to most of the prisoners who pass through its door there is a sort of grim humor in the sign that greets them in the corridor: "It is prudent to insure your life."

Over four hundred prisoners are locked in the rooms in the upper stories where the personnel of the company was formerly lodged; ordinary single and double rooms holding from two to eighteen persons. In most of these rooms the sun never shines,

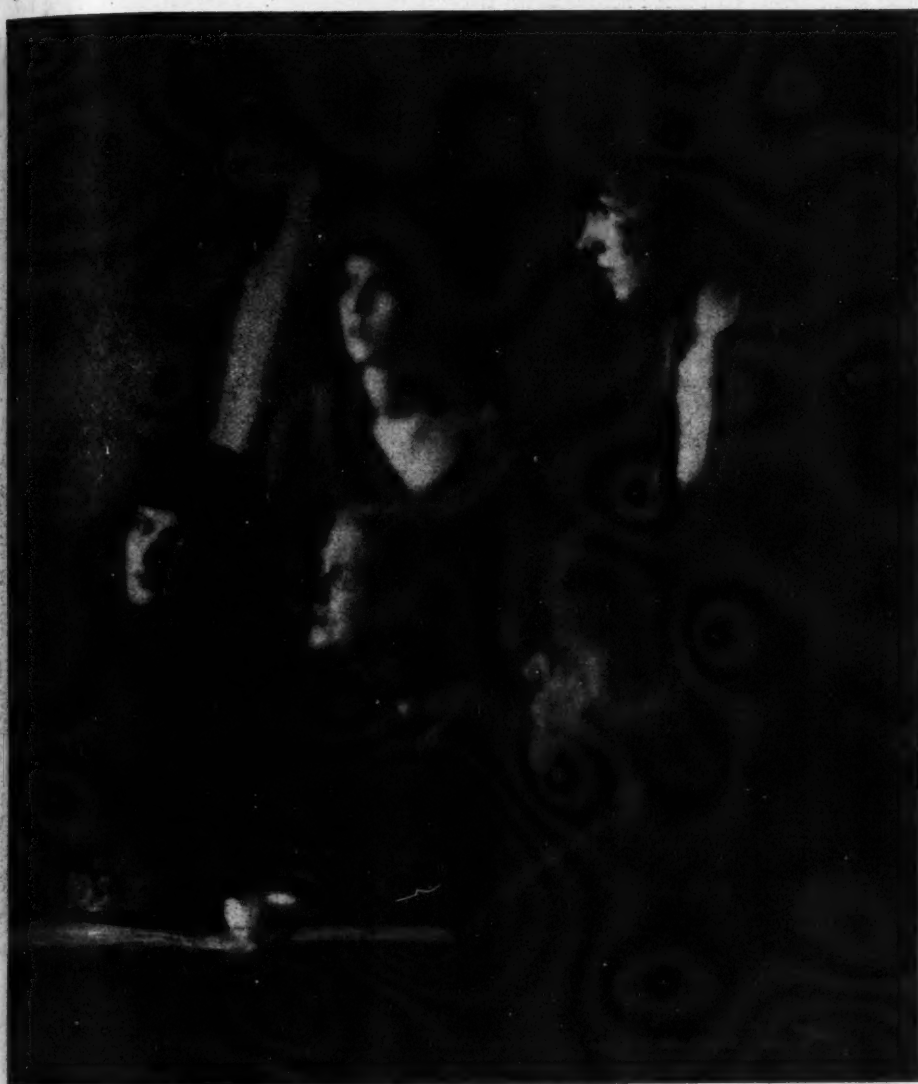
as they face on two small inner courts. Heavy iron bars have been placed at the windows, and they are whitewashed to prevent a view of the courts below. The furniture consists of plank beds with a wooden headrest for a pillow and a bag of straw for a mattress, a long deal table and the inevitable *parashka*, a big iron garbage can. No provision is made for exercise, and the prisoners remain in their rooms night and day except for the expedition twice daily to the washroom.

The population of Lubianka 2 is a floating one, it being used as a detention prison for accused persons held for trial or cross-examination, who remain for periods varying from a few weeks to several months.

Life in its outward aspects never changes in the Cheka. There are no books and no diversions, no routine, no occupations. Four walls and your fellow prisoners to look at, three dreary meals a day and the weekly food package on Fridays if you are lucky enough to have friends in Moscow. That is all. Monotonous, yes, for those who depend on externals for entertainment; but for those who look deeper, life in the Cheka is an inexhaustible fund of romance. Outside you read stories—inside you live them.

From October, 1920, to June, 1921, I was a prisoner in the

Thumbnail Dramas Within 4 Grim Walls



"I lied to you—
lied, do you hear?
I'm a Nasyetka,
that's what I am."

D STORIES

Lubianka—two hundred and twenty-five days and nights—in a room with from seven to twelve women. The days were pretty much all the same. Ugly gray dawn, breakfast of black bread and tea, domestic chores, the daily hunt for vermin, the trip to the washroom, roll call, the weekly visit of the doctor, dinner of herring soup and *kasha*, long afternoons interrupted by summonses to cross-examinations and removal of transferred or discharged prisoners, a second instalment of herring soup for supper, improvised games and amusements, lights out at ten. Then we became real people. When the rooms are dark and the night guards are gossiping and drinking tea in the corridors, the prison is widest awake and its inmates most keenly, vibrantly alive.

There are furtive tappings on the steam pipes in the prison Morse. Messages are exchanged between neighbors, above, below and on both sides. Clandestine notes are written, to be smuggled the next day to comrades in other rooms or "*na volio*"—outside. Women who have maintained stoical or despairing silence throughout the day exchange whispered confidences; new prisoners, terrified, defiant or indifferent, are brought in, and occasionally one is taken for a midnight cross-examination, or to start the first stage of a journey that ends before a firing squad.

Night after night I listened to whispered stories, some humorous, some sordid, some pathetic; comedies, idylls, grim tragedies told by innumerable Scheherezades. I knew the lives and problems of most of my fellow prisoners up to the moment of their arrest. Day by day I watched them and saw new chapters added one by one till the stories were almost complete. Then one after another the story tellers of my "Russian Nights" were taken off by the impassive guards who vouchsafed no information beyond the customary "Pack your clothes," and I rarely heard the last chapters though they occasionally reached me second-hand or I was able to guess them in advance.

In the following pages I have retold a few of these stories as we heard and lived them in the Chéka. I offer no apology for the fact that most of them are unfinished. The reader will have to supply the sequels, as I did, for himself.

The Talisman

TAP-TAP, tap-tap, tap, tap, gently at first, then boldly, insistently. The sound was coming from a steam pipe running parallel with the floor and extending into the next room. A

Social Révolutionary got up from the plank bed where she had been lying, walked to the corner and listened, then shook her head.

"I thought perhaps it was one of the comrades," she said, "but I don't make any sense out of the letters. It's not our code."

Tap-tap again, this time more impatiently.

"The *Natziroll*—Captain of the Guard—will be here any minute," said the Social Revolutionary. "Whoever it is, he must be a new one. He doesn't know the game. I'm going to warn him to shut up."

Picking up a wooden spoon, she dragged it along the pipe. Scr-a-a-ach—the sign in the prisoner's wireless code signifying the end of a sentence. Silence—and none too soon. In a few minutes the shuffling felt *valinki* of the guard were heard outside the door, the metal plate over the *glazok* or peephole was softly raised, an eye appeared at the opening, and after a brief survey of the room, an invisible hand put out the electric light.

The Social Revolutionary yawned, stretched herself out at full length on her bed and went to sleep. The other women did the same, all except a young girl on the bed in the corner just over the steam pipe. For a long time she lay with her hands behind her head, her open eyes staring fixedly at the ceiling, her thoughts revolving in an endless circle, reviewing all the events that had led to her imprisonment.

Who had given her away? The more she thought the less she could make it out.

Less than a year ago she had been living in Esthonia with her father and mother, working as a stenographer in one of the government offices in Reval; and then came the news of Emilia's

arrest. Emilia was her younger sister who had run away with a Russian officer three years before. They heard nothing of her until a home-coming Esthonian brought word that she and her husband had been arrested and the latter shot. Emilia was reported to be in prison somewhere in Moscow.

There was no one in Moscow who could send her food or ordinary comforts and no accurate information could be obtained as to her probable fate. Having married a Russian, she was a Russian subject, and the Esthonian Mission was powerless to help her. Something must be done.

Then Emilia's sister hit upon a plan. Professing great sympathy with Communism, she applied for membership, and after a few months' probation was admitted to the party. Little by little she won the confidence of the party members until at last she obtained what she had been working for, the job of secret courier between the Esthonian Communists and the Esthonian Soviet in Moscow.

On her first trip to Moscow she made careful, furtive inquiries as to Emilia. Finally she found out that she was in the secret prison of the Cheka in the Lubianka, ill, half starving and expecting a baby in a month's time.

The next time she brought a package of nourishing food, clean underclothing and medicine, and on the day when prisoners were permitted to receive *peredachas*—food packages—she brought it to the prison herself, thinking that her identity would not be known. A bland official received her.

"Step this way, please," he said, opening the door into an inner room. "Now hand over your papers," he continued. "You are under arrest."

The next day she had been subjected to a grilling cross-examination that lasted four hours. She was accused of having had secret communications with her sister, of having betrayed the party and of being an Esthonian spy.

"Tell us the truth," the judge repeated over and over again. "Do you realize what it means to face a firing squad?"

"I've already told you," she answered, "that I knew nothing of my sister or her activities, only that she had been arrested. We thought perhaps she was dead. My mother was dying herself, from the worry and suspense. I came to Moscow and made use of my party connection, if you like, to find her—nothing more. I have never betrayed a comrade or a trust."

"You're a clever one," he scoffed. "We have the proof of your activities."

"Show me the evidence," she implored, but he only laughed.

Since then she had been put through the third degree five times, each time without result. The net was tightening about her. There seemed to be no escape. "God, what a world! Was there any place," she wondered, "where people lived simple, normal lives?"

Just then she heard a scratching underneath her bed.

"Ugh, rats." She shuddered and curled up in a small knot.

The scratching kept on steadily. Listening closely, she perceived that the sound was not made by a rat. A sharp instrument was scraping the plaster on the other side of the partition, close to the steam pipe. Her bed was close to the window, and the light from an arc



She leaned over and listened again. Someone was making a hole in the wall.



The prison room vanished as if by magic when Tasya, barefoot, began her wild Tartar dance.

lamp in a court outside cast a faint glow through the white-washed panes. In about an hour, gazing steadily at the spot, she saw the plaster on her side begin to crumble and suddenly next to the pipe appeared the point of a rusty nail, which was turned and twisted until an opening about an inch in diameter had been made.

Jumping out of bed, she put her ear to the hole. Someone was listening on the other side too. She could hear heavy breathing. Then someone tapped softly. She tapped in answer.

A man's voice on the other side of the partition whispered:

"Who's there?"

"Chlo—what?" she answered, bewildered.

"For God's sake," said the voice, "isn't there anyone in your room who speaks English?"

She did not understand a syllable at first, except the word "English," but she had studied English a little in the university.

"I spik a leetl."

"Good!" was the fervent response.

"You Englishman?" she inquired.

"No, an American."

She gasped. Long years before she had had an uncle who had gone to America. They had heard fabulous tales of his wealth.

"Know you my uncle in Brookleen," she demanded, "Ivan Gregorevitch Tomingas?"

"Never heard of Tommy," was the cheerful answer, "but say, if he speaks English as well as you do he's all right."

"What you say?" asked the girl. A chuckle was the only reply.

"Why they arrest you?" she pursued.

"Well, you see, I went to college and I read a lot about an old gentleman named Karl Marx. Ever hear of him?"

"Da da," she said quickly, "yees."

"Good chap, Marx," continued the voice. "I was rather stuck on him. When these people over here started a government based on his ideas I thought I'd come over and help them out. I'm an expert mechanical draftsman."

"What you say?" asked the girl, bewildered.

"I make plans for machines, how to build them you know. I left home six months ago, got a job in a factory here and worked—hard. The men under me were never on hand for work. I got after the boss about it."

"Don't you know," he said, "that those men are Communists? They are excused to do party work."

"Party work be hanged," I said. "You can't run a government on propaganda, you've got to run it on manual labor." A fellow in overalls—wait till I get out, I'll punch his face, see if I don't—looked at me funny. The next day I was arrested as a counter-revolutionary. Huh," he sniffed contemptuously, "I came over here because I was too revolutionary for America, but if I ever get out of this I'm going back home and put up with capitalism for a while."

"O-h-h!" said the girl vaguely. She understood about half of what he said, but she liked his voice.

"What did they pinch you for?"

"I not understand."

"Why were you arrested?"

Then she told him the whole story. "I now wait to die," she ended.

"Say, that's too bad," returned the kind voice, evidently concerned. "Maybe when I get out I can help you."

"You get yourself lock up again."

A laugh was the only reply. Then gently—"Listen, little comrade, we've both got lots of things we want to forget. I'm so lonely in this place I don't know what to do. At least we can talk to each other every night. What's your name? Mine's Bob."

"Vera," she whispered.

Just then there were footsteps in the hall. With a lithe movement the girl sprang to her feet, flung herself on the bed and covered herself with her coat. Two seconds later when the guard opened the door to let in a new prisoner she was apparently sound asleep.

All the next day the girl thought over the conversation of the night before, but she did not confide her secret to any of her companions. About an hour after the lights were put out she heard a cautious knock. In an instant she was under the bed. A small roll of paper protruded from the hole. Pulling it out she unrolled it and saw a sketch of a pretty girl with masses of dark hair braided and coiled over her ears. Underneath it was written, "This is how you look to me."

Vera laughed. She was really, honestly now, just a little prettier than that girl. But she didn't fix her hair that way. She would change it tomorrow.

She knocked gently. "Here," came a sibilant whisper through the partition.

"Zank you so mooch. That girl ver' pretty zough."

"So are you," was the reply. "I peeped at you through the keyhole this morning when you went to the washroom. Weren't you wearing a green blouse?"

"Yes, but how you know?"

"Just instinct, I guess"—with an embarrassed laugh.

"Tomorrow you draw your picture—yees?"

"Sure," was the prompt reply.

The next night there was a picture of a broad-shouldered young man with frank, merry eyes, the lower part of his face hidden, however, by an enormous beard. Underneath was written "some beard."

Vera didn't exactly understand the American slang, but she chuckled over what she saw was evidently a caricature of a prepossessing young man, and she hid it under her straw pallet.

After that they talked of everything under the sun—of her life at home, of life in America, of the great Idea the man had come so far to serve, of the disillusionment that had come to him.

Days meant nothing to Vera after this; she lived only for the stealthy knock and the voice on the other side of the wall. She and Bob invented all sorts of amusements, riddles, conundrums. He began to correct her English and she to teach him a few Russian words, choking with laughter over his impossible accent.

One day there was much coming and going in the room next

door. Several of the inmates were taken to the *dopros*—cross-examination. She could hardly wait till evening to find out if Bob was one of them. Finally night came.

"Vera."

"Yes, Bob."

"Vera, little comrade, I'm going to be let out tomorrow."

"Slava Bog—thank God!" said Vera valiantly. She was glad, of course—"Glad, glad," she repeated defiantly—but she choked back a rising sob.

"Listen, Vera, there's something I have to tell you before I go. I love you. A few weeks ago I wanted nothing so much as to get out of here, to go home, but now—oh, Vera, I just want to touch you!" and he beat with his hands on the partition.

Vera closed her eyes. A subtle current seemed to break the material barrier between them. She could almost feel his warm breath on her smooth cheek.

"Vera—you love me too, don't you? Vera—answer me, I can't see you, girl."

"Bob," murmured Vera, "you, you—oh! more than all else, *golubchik*, my darling."

There was silence for a minute. It was broken by Bob. "That's all I wanted to know," he said simply.

"But Bob, don't you see that it can't do you any good, this our love? You will go home, you will try to forget me. It is the beginning and the end. I must stay here long months, and then perhaps—"

"Stop!" came the peremptory voice from the other side of the partition. "I am not going home. Do you think I'm going to give you up after what you've told me? Listen—I'll promise them anything, anything. I shall go to a great engineer I know and offer my services to the Soviet government. They won't turn me down. Every Friday you will get a *peredacha* from me. In it will be a little note hidden where no one can find it—in the hem of my canvas knapsack. I'll report progress to date, for I'm going to work and pull wires until I get you out."

"It's no use, Bob."

"Don't"—fiercely—"just wait. And Vera—if they get you they can have me, too."

All the rest of the night Vera and Bob talked in low whispers. It was only when it began to grow light that they found the courage to say good by.

The next day Vera had a headache and lay on her bed all day without speaking a word to anyone. Only once she opened her eyes and listened intently when someone was taken from the next room.

On the following Friday for the first time Vera received a *peredacha*, but without the name of the sender attached.

"Who's your friend, Vera?" demanded one of her companions.

"I don't know, I'm sure," she said coldly.

That night she unripped the hem of the canvas bag and found a tiny note written on a piece of muslin. It said:

"Sit tight, Vera dear, I'm on the job." She shook her head over the impossible English, but she surreptitiously kissed the note.

The next week Vera received another note, not quite so optimistic, but she liked it even more. Bob wrote:

"I'll fight this thing out if it can be done. Nothing matters except that I love you, love you. Whatever comes to you will come to me." She hid it between the sole and inner lining of her shoe.

One afternoon the door was thrown open by a prison guard.

"Adena," he demanded.

"Here," said Vera faintly.

"Pack your clothes!" he ordered.

While she tied up her few belongings in a handkerchief, he stood quite motionless, "*skorée*—quicker," being the only remark he made.

As she went out Vera's step was steady, her eyes were dry. She was going serenely to meet whatever fate was in store for her, for she possessed a magic talisman, a piece of dirty muslin tucked in her shoe on which was scribbled—"Nothing else matters, I love you."

Nasyetka

IT WAS past two o'clock and the occupants of Room 44, who had been undisturbed since the lights had been put out at ten o'clock, were suddenly roused by the sound of a ke grating in the lock. The door was flung open and the room flooded with light to admit a new prisoner. One by one sleepy heads were raised from straw pallets to inspect the new arrival.

"Gospodi!" exclaimed Maria Alexeievna, (Continued on page 162)

"You," screamed Phyllis "what'd you pick a girl like me for if you wanted some-body to stay home and darn your socks?"



Illustrations

by

H. J. Mowat

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The essence of Movieland in terse human drama

Starring Mrs. Tim Hale

THE dinner hour in Hollywood is usually set from six-thirty to seven.

Therefore, unless guests are heartlessly tardy, it is still light enough in summer to eat without electricity. The last of the California sunshine, having lost its heat but retained its topaz glow, lingers in a radiance that is rather like candlelight. And the burning desert heat of the long, hot day melts miraculously into a sudden, bracing coolness. The night scent begins to pour down from the hills, fresh, cool and filled with sage and pine and eucalyptus and rock earth, so that the dinner hour is often the most enjoyable in the whole July day.

Tim Hale regarded the three-inch New York cut which the butler had just brought in with the searching yet pessimistic eye of the connoisseur.

"How much butter you got on there, Parkins?" he demanded instantly, in a deeply worried tone. "Don't look to me like there's enough butter on there."

Parkins adjusted the platter reverently before Tim's place.

"Oh yes, sir!" he said reassuringly, "plenty, sir, I'm sure! I saw Sam put it on myself, four tablespoons and a half, sir, just like you always say."

Swiftly he brought a small tray, loaded with bottles and boxes, from the big buffet and placed it beside the piping hot steak.

As carefully as a chemist, with his big, crooked hands, Tim Hale began the slow application of the mustard, rubbing it in patiently until the hot, buttered surface absorbed it, adding the Cayenne delicately, the touch of tarragon vinegar, the dash of anchovy paste and last of all the sauces from the bottles before him.

"There," said Tim Hale, as he carved with an expert hand. "Less I'm mistaken that's about right."

His big, cheerful grin broke out. The small, weather-beaten man across the table smiled pleasantly in response. His little, shrewd eyes were twisted to glittering slits.

"D'you exhibit that much concern about all your grub, Tim?" he asked, in a voice that creaked and cracked like an old wagon on a rough road.



Tim Hale—fifty and in love with a blonde chicken with a pouting mouth and a round chin—did not

Tim Hale laughed. "Well, I tell you, Windriver," he said, half apologetically, "I always did like to eat. I'm mighty fond of good food. I can't say I've grown partial yet to some of these grated cheese and scrambled patty fixings I get some places where I eat—dine. But when I'm home, I like plenty of regular stuff that's got a good, hot taste and still fills me up. Amy Landis revealed the secret of this here steak to me. She's a mighty fine cook, I tell you."

"I suppose," said his guest, contemplating the retreating back of Parkins as it disappeared through the swinging doors, "I suppose when you got a butler, and a chef, and truck like that, it takes a heap of living up to, don't it, Tim?"

"Well, yes, in a way. I've had Parkins four years and I'm pretty near hardened to him now. He's a good butler."

The small man nodded. "This steak's good," he admitted, chewing a large bite experimentally, "but I ain't able to see where it's got so much on a good tenderloin heated over a camp-fire, like we used to do back in Oklahoma."

Tim Hale took a large drink from the sparkling glass Parkins had filled. "No," he agreed slowly, "I don't reckon maybe it has. But you know how it is, Windriver, you know how it is. You've made a heap of money yourself, fooling around with that Texas land you bought up for pasture and turned out to be chuck full of oil."

Windriver Bill wiped his mustache with the monogrammed linen napkin. "Yep. I shouldn't wonder if I could about call

any bet you'd be apt to make. But I ain't famous, Tim—that's where we go different trails. I ain't famous, leastwise not around the country in general. O' course there is still a few places in Oklahoma and Texas where they remember I used to set on top of a horse better'n some in the old days. But your name has become, as it were, a household word."

"You spoke a piece, then, Windriver. You ain't famous and I am. Maybe now I ain't as famous as I was a coupla years back." His face fell a trifle. "I ought to 'a' been ten years younger when I started. Forty is too late for a movie actor to start, even if he starts being a star first buck. We birds that has lived outdoors all our lives don't show no age at all around forty. Regular baby show. Guess they thought I was a plum yearling when they roped me out of that contest I won up at Green River that time. But when we hit fifty, we begin to slip. My bones don't applaud a horse like they once did. I got a lot of young fellows in my own gang right now can make me look like a green hand sure. Fifty ain't maybe what you might call aged, but it's shady for a movie actor."

"And a matinée idol." Windriver's face was impassive, but from the eye slits a pale fire twinkled. "I never'd 'a' thought from what I knew of Tim Hale in the old days he'd ever get to be the dream of fair women and the fairy prince of blushing girls."

"Now, Windriver, you hush that. They don't do one thing except write me a lot of letters I mostly can't read. I got a



drink: Perhaps that was why he never seemed quite to fit in a party.

secretary answers them and he sure slings a wicked typewriter." "Have you got a valet too, Tim? That evening frock you got on looks mighty well hooked up for a fellow never saw one except on a waiter till after he was forty."

"Yep. I got a Jap." "Tim, you ole maverick, do you like it—all this?" asked Windriver Bill abruptly.

"Yep, I like it. Seemed mighty strange at first, putting paint all over my ugly old mug every day and doing lollypop stuff in front of a black box, with fiddles playing to adjust my emotions for me. But I got used to it. Fame"—he sipped his wine reflectively—"fame is one of those things you can't explain, Windriver. Not unless you can control more language than a poet. It gets a strangle hold on you. I wonder if you've got any idee as to what extent I'm famous?"

The other closed one eye completely. "I have. Only a few of 'em, maybe three or four, has anything on you, Tim. Men like you because you was a man before you become a actor, and kids like you because you give 'em the old rough stuff, and the women—gosh darn it. Women is a special kind of race. I most got mobbed in a hotel in San Antone recent because I admitted I knew you. The females descended on me like bees in a hive. Wanted to know all about you. But I didn't tell 'em, Tim. Not all, that is."

"You old coyote," said Tim Hale, grinning sheepishly. He had fallen, as the conversation progressed, more and more

into his old habits of speech, more and more into the tone of his visitor.

"And now I hear you're going to get married," the little man spoke in his expressionless voice. "Is that correct? A lot of the ladies will be right upset."

Tim Hale's ugly, fascinating masculine face turned a deep, mottled crimson. The poise and manner he had acquired and cultivated deserted him. With his old friend of the weather-beaten countenance and the shrewd, twinkling eye, he returned to the days of his youth. He forgot that he had become a lord and a dictator.

"That's correct," he admitted. "Ever been married before, Tim?"

"Only once. Long time ago when I was a kid, I got hitched with a waitress up in Montana. But it turned out some other guy had staked a previous claim. Even my press agent don't know about that. It scared me off matrimony for a while."

"Still, you've contemplated taking the tender step a few times, if what the papers say is true."

"You can't believe everything you read in the papers about us movie stars," said Tim Hale brusquely. "I may have considered it, like lots of other men that don't get it written up in the papers if they tell a woman she's got a pretty new hat. But I never made up my mind to it before. You're going to meet the future Mrs. Tim Hale tonight. And she'll just naturally knock your other eye out, Windriver. Get prepared. Not what you'd 'a' thought of old Tim Hale marrying. She's what they call in Hollywood some chicken. No use talking, a man likes a pretty face."

"For Pete's sake, how old is she?"

Tim Hale waited until Parkins had brought the coffee. He pushed aside his gold cigarette box and papers rolled himself a cigarette.

Then, slowly, he said: "Well, she says she's nineteen. But I got an idee she's some past twenty."

Windriver Bill jumped. "Nineteen! My gosh, Tim, you ain't really figurin' on marrying a baby only nineteen years old!"

"What's so young about nineteen?" said Tim Hale wrathfully. "You don't know women, Windriver. She's been in pictures awhile and she's a woman of the world. I don't care how young they are, aren't any girls out here in pictures that are babies no more. You're going to see her tonight, anyway, and—I ain't ballyhooing to the world at large about me being fifty. To hear some of these here upstarts talk you'd expect I was past eighty and never did have no boyhood, but I'm admitting to forty-four."

The two men crossed into the elegant hall. It was, in its way, quite perfect. Without a single alteration, it might have served as an interior decorator's dream. The walls were soft gold. The lights inverted. The rugs on the glassy polished floors were authentic Persians and Orientals. Beyond opened a vista of the early French period—a gleam of mirrors. Thin-legged, gilt chairs. Blue satin, brocade walls.

So far as its appropriateness went, Tim Hale might as well have worn a lace mantilla on his head.

Windriver Bill regarded it through one eye with a sort of dazed unbelief.

"Did you build this—this place for your missus?" he asked. Tim Hale, struggling into his light topcoat with the aid of a Jap boy, gave a muffled grunt. "Well, in a way. Mostly, I didn't have a lot to say about it. I—I hired an architect to build it and he knew such a lot I never got up courage to contradict him much. It'll be a nice place for a woman. Anyway, my Aunt Martha still lives with me, you know. I got a big stable out in the back yard. And some rooms upstairs."

"I should think," said the small man, accepting his hat from the Jap with evident suspicion, "you'd have to have a place where you could get your feet up once in a while."

A big, handsome limousine painted dark maroon with light disc wheels had drawn up before the door. The chauffeur wore a braided livery. The interior showed raspberry velvet and a vase filled with roses.

As the chauffeur closed the heavy door, another car drew up swiftly behind them. A plain, serviceable, dark blue coupé. At the wheel, a gray-haired woman whose eyes snapped even in the darkness. The lights from the stone pillars of Tim Hale's entrance gates fell suddenly upon the dark interior and Windriver Bill had a glimpse of another face, a sweet, slightly smiling face, under a hat brim of pink roses.

The woman at the wheel shouted something but Tim Hale said rapidly to the chauffeur through the speaking tube, "Go on. Hurry."

There was a moment's silence, then Windriver Bill said suavely, "That lady looked to me a heap like your Aunt Martha."

"Yep. But you'll see her in the morning. No use stopping to chin now. She can't say nothing under a couple of hours. And we're late."

"Who was the other lady, in the flowery hat?"

"Hm-m. Reckon it was Mrs. Landis. Amy Landis. She's a great friend of Martha's. Good cook, Amy is. She's a right sensible old lady, and a sort of soothing influence on Martha."

"How old is she?" inquired Windriver Bill.

"Amy? I should think she must be forty."

"My, she's certainly getting along, ain't she?"

Windriver Bill's eyes had completely disappeared and he chewed violently upon his cigar as they sped over the bright, self-satisfied streets. The car stopped before a tiny court where eight infinitesimal bungalows faced each other on one lot. Tim Hale's fiancée, shrouded in scented fur, stepped in but it was not until they arrived at the party that Windriver Bill had a good look at her.

She was undeniably pretty. Too pretty to be married to, was the little man's thought. A chicken.

Windriver Bill admired the exquisite order of her golden hair, elaborately dressed on her small head. Her great, starry blue eyes. The soft roundness of her bare shoulders and her slim, graceful little body in its extreme, extravagant gown. About the full mouth, whose upper lip swelled into a pout as it joined its fellow, and the round, soft chin like that of an obstinate baby, he was not so sure.

He didn't claim to know anything about women, but he did know more than a little about human nature. He would not have bought cattle from her without seeing them first.

It was a very lively party.

In a magnificent house.

Windriver did not discover who his host and hostess might be, though he judged the latter to be a plump little woman with dark eyes and a flow of language he had never heard equaled.

He was introduced to no one. Neither, apparently, was anyone else.

Windriver Bill was not a prohibitionist. Nor, it seemed, was his host. Consequently his impressions in review were a bit vague.

A girl in black velvet doing what she called "falls." The flash of her pink silk bloomers against the black velvet as she whirled. Groups of men gathered in a big white kitchen. A gray and white kitten that had been hennaed. Couples clinging close in the most remarkably good dancing. A red-headed young man doing imitations.

A pretty girl with bobbed hair who sat on his lap and told him quite candidly that life was a rotten mess because her sweetie had gone back to his wife. Months later, he recognized her on the screen as a star of the second water.

Tim Hale, dancing with his Phyllis. Not a good dancer, but a game, hard working old cuss. Sitting on the floor in a circle with Phyllis and the hostess and lots of others, playing some sort of game where they turned cards and each made a

noise like some animal. Tim was a donkey. His bray was startling. Everybody lay on the floor, laughing at him.

Tim Hale. Fifty and in love with a blonde chicken, with a pouting mouth and a round chin.

Tim did not drink. Not a drop. Perhaps that was why he never seemed quite to fit in. Perhaps not.

As they drove home through a foggy, pearl dawn, Windriver decided with alcoholic firmness that he was glad he had made his money in oil.

II

THE house was full of summer sunshine and silence, when Windriver Bill descended the grand staircase the next morning. Parkins had brought him breakfast in his room and he had managed to consume half a roll and drink three cups of coffee without the moral support of his trousers.

Aimlessly he wandered through the big rooms. The wide front windows revealed a pretty street full of lacy pepper trees and a white, well ordered Colonial mansion across the way, where a girl in blue Chinese pajamas was communing with some goldfish in a marble fountain.

He heard voices and strolled through the cretonne and wicker sunroom into the back yard.

Two ladies were seated together beneath the Japanese pergola drying their hair. Windriver Bill paused in some embarrassment.

But Miss Martha Hale was not embarrassed. Her hair was stiff, gray, self-respecting hair and could be viewed, she would have declared, without harm to herself or the beholder. Miss Hale's views of life were rigid, but she did not hold with false modesty.

The other lady's hair was likewise touched with gray, but softly, almost lovingly. It had been pretty brown hair with a suggestion of wave in it and somehow the gray had not defaced it. The round face beneath it, even in the morning sunshine and untouched by rouge or powder, was soft and smooth and faintly pink. Neither did the gentle wrinkles or the delicate lines about the soft brown eyes suggest age.

Mrs. Landis had lived a gentle, uneventful, somewhat unhappy existence. She had always taken what she considered the respectable precautions against age. Facial operations and excessive make-up and hair dyes were not included.

She was forty. She looked thirty-five. It was Mrs. Landis's view that a woman who looked too much younger than she was only inconvenienced herself.

"Sit down, Windriver," said Miss Martha briskly, as she stood up and began to brush the long ripples of Mrs. Landis's hair. "Tim's gone to the studio."

Tim's aunt, who by a freak of circumstance was two years younger than her famous nephew, snapped her gray eyes at the small man as he sat down on the stone steps. "Well, Tim's a bigger fool than ever, Bill," she said. "Ain't changed a mite since you saw him except for the worse."

"He's a mighty famous man now, Martha," said Windriver Bill. He was not a religious man and his perusal of the Bible had always been curious rather than theological, but he considered Martha well named. Like her Biblical predecessor, she was generally "careful and troubled about many things."

"Famous? What for? Jumping around making monkey faces. Carrying on scandalous for a man of his years. I don't see how he can bring himself to do some of the things. I should think he'd feel that silly!" She emphasized her remarks with the hairbrush and Mrs. Landis turned a sweet but deprecating smile on Windriver Bill. "I'm just naturally flabbergasted over the foolishness of the people rushing around to see his pictures."

"The way women act is ridiculous, that's all. Heavens knows I ain't ready to be an angel and I wouldn't want to be a man, but sometimes it makes me right ashamed I'm a woman. Just last week, if you could believe this, a big car drove right up to my very door. Three women come up and wanted to see where Tim slept. For all they had on furs and diamonds and lace socks, I says right out: 'It ain't according to my bringing up for females to run around looking at the places where men sleep. Things like that is best covered up,' I says."

Amy Landis put up a protesting hand. "Martha, dear," she cried, "you pull terribly. Besides, dear, it isn't Tim's fault that everybody likes him. It was just a freak of fate that put him in pictures in the first place. You know how Jake Lobenshien just happened to see him and get the idea that a man of his type would be a big hit. Tim's the same underneath."

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Windriver Bill jumped. "My gosh, Tim, you ain't figurin' on marrying a baby only nineteen years old!"

Martha Hale sniffed. "He certainly is not and you know it, Amy Landis. Not that Tim ever was what I hoped for him to be, a God-fearing, church-going, settled business man. No. But now, when he's fifty years old, to be acting—play-acting, my father used to call it—and cavorting around with a lot of simple minded, good for nothing kids. Wearing funny clothes and fancy neckties, too. Tim never was any good for that kind of thing, as I know of."

Windriver Bill considered this. It was true. Even in Oklahoma, where social etiquette had been wholly financial, Tim

had not been a good mixer in mixed company. A man's man. A good poker player. But a sucker for the women. Just one of those men.

He recollected one Liza Lou—a pretty girl—

"Tim's gone crazy," Miss Martha's voice went on, as she spread the bright, dry masses of brown hair across Mrs. Landis's shoulders. "Likes this life. Likes the young folks. He don't care for what's called society and he don't care much for his money. It's the movie folks he likes to play around with. Never'd had a chance to know that kind if he hadn't just happened to get to

be one of the big ones himself. Tim Hale ain't an actor. Not much. He's a cowpuncher. When he's through on the screen, where'll he be? They ain't going to bother with him then."

Mrs. Landis got up. "Well, Martha," she said, and something in her voice made Windriver Bill decide that the conversation was distasteful to her, "I'll run up to your room and comb my hair and I guess I *will* stay to lunch, if you want me."

Windriver Bill followed her through the door with eyes of regretful admiration. Women like that always made him wish he was a marrying man. Still—

Miss Martha Hale was talking again. "Now this chit, this minx, this—this chicken he's engaged to. An actress."

"I seen her last night."

"Now, Bill, what does he want with a girl like that? She don't care two straws for him, as it's been my painful duty to tell him over and over again. All she wants is what she can get. She wants to be Mrs. Tim Hale. She'll—"

"Who's this Mrs. Landis?" asked the little man shrewdly.

Martha Hale smiled grimly. "Oh, she's just my friend now! Tim used to think a lot of her before her worthless husband died and he got to be a star. Now he wouldn't look at her. No sir! He don't look around and see that all the happy movie marriages he raves about are mostly where the man had sense enough to pick out a fine, good little woman that wasn't mixed up in this screen business and had some time to think about her husband and her home. He wants the kind he's been used to seeing since he got in the movies. He wants 'em perfumed and painted. It's ruined his tastes for ordinary women, like whisky ruins your taste for tea. I admit there's something about 'em, but after the experiences Tim Hale's had—"

It was not a pleasant story she told, rocking in her wicker chair in the pleasant sun and shadow of the fragrant pergola.

Little Marion Moulton. His first leading woman. A tiny, fragile thing like a white butterfly.

"She let him think she was going to marry him just as long as she wanted to be his leading woman. The company wanted to fire her," said Miss Hale. "That was the one broke Tim's heart, I thought. But I found a man's heart can't be broke so bad but what another woman can patch it up."

Betty Sherman, dark eyes, dark hair, tall and slim. Who rode like an Indian, shot like a soldier and smiled like an angel.

"Betty threw him over for a big producer. Found she could do better for herself. He'd bought the wedding ring, that time. One thing I will say for Tim, he's a *moral* man. Always wants to marry 'em."

Others. Minor ones.

Now Phyllis. Phyllis of the blonde curls and starry blue eyes. "I'm afraid she's going to marry him," said Miss Martha Hale, and for the first time her voice lost its belligerent tone. It was strange to hear that militant voice broken and afraid.

"Well, now," said the little man uncomfortably, "marriage ain't such an awful thing. I always fought shy of it myself, but Tim's a marrying man. Life can't be *all* sunshine. I've had other troubles. Tim's a big he-man and I guess he can look out for himself."

"Windriver Bill Ellis," said Miss Martha Hale, "you're more simple minded than I give you credit for if you believe that. A little bullet'll bring down a big man just as good as a small one—and a little woman can make a darneder fool of a big man than a small one, because there's more of him to act foolish."

"Ma'am," said Windriver Bill slowly, "I reckon you're right. I am not experienced with women. But I never had a horse step out from under me yet and I am led to believe that horses and ladies ain't un-alike. If one makes you pull leather, the rest know it. And there are horses that work best in double harness and there is others that don't never get used to it. But I have been in a few tight places in my life, and it's been my experience, Miss Martha, that the worst never happens."

III

TIM HALE heard her footsteps on the boardwalk before she turned the corner of the big stage.

He loved her footsteps. They were so characteristic of her—the light, pattering click of her tiny, slipped feet.

He loved the softness of it, the decided tap-tap of the French heels. It suggested Phyllis—fashion, expensiveness, frivolity.

After her footsteps—a breath of perfume so acutely Phyllis's own that it actually made him take hold of the arm of his chair.

A perfume such as in the days before fate took him from his cattle, his hills, his horses and flung him head first into fame and riches, he had never dreamed could exist. An Arabian Nights' perfume.

Then Phyllis herself, in a sport frock of white that, ending just below her knees, showed slim, graceful legs and tiny ankles. A soft white hat over her elaborate hair. Her face perfectly tinted.

Tim Hale took her in with eyes that spelled subjection. This was *woman*—dainty, sweet, enticing, enhanced. Tim Hale had seen rich women, now, and beautiful women and cultured women. In the old days, when he was young and a fine figure of a man and had each month as much money as the next man, he had bought his fill of the others.

But it was these little motion picture girls that ensnared him. Phyllis bewildered him. Her daring, her immense chic, her assured handling of herself. Her frankness. Her mystery. All cut on the same mold, these girls, but all intriguing.

She came in with her swaying, impudent walk. Curled up against him a moment. Kissed him with her fragrant young mouth. A kitten. A fairy. She left a taste of perfumed lip stick on his mouth.

Then she went to the big davenport beneath the windows of the dressing room and flung herself down. Today the little fan-web lines, anger lines, disappointment lines, envy lines, were almost smothered in smiles. Phyllis—always lovely. Phyllis happy—beyond compare.

She did not smoke. She liked it but she thought the scent on her lips uninviting. She feared any stain on her teeth or hands. Phyllis understood the value of property.

"It's settled, Tim," she said, and her voice was a veritable purr. "They'll give me five hundred a week, a two year contract, six pictures a year. They star me, Tim, *star* me. I'm so happy I can hardly breathe."

Tim Hale had turned to face her and now his hands made that characteristic gesture of his, brought up and striking down hard on the arms of his chair.

But Phyllis—joyous Phyllis—failed to notice him.

"I've been at it six years, Tim. I'm not a great actress. I'm twenty-two. That's old to begin starring. It's the one thing I want—want—want. To be somebody. But you did it for me, dear old thing," she purred at him. "They made the contract on the understanding that I'd have to be billed as Mrs. Tim Hale. Starring Mrs. Tim Hale. That way I get all the benefit of your name and following and every nickel that's spent on you for advertising."

"What!"

It was a cry.

After it, there was silence.

Phyllis looked once into Tim Hale's face. Then she sat up, trembling. One white hand, with its glittering five carat solitaire, went out. Her purr died in her slim throat.

It was a long silence.

Tim Hale was a slow man. He thought slowly. He acted slowly, except in those crises where his training had taught him to act automatically with the swiftness of a snake.

His eyes grew cold. In Oklahoma and various other places, there were men who had looked into those eyes across a poker table and laid down the best hand. They were the eyes that could look unmoved down a blue gun barrel.

But neither Phyllis nor any other woman had ever seen them before—pale and cold and ominous.

His ugly face creased and folded like a mask.

Once Phyllis tried to speak.

But he held up his hand, that big, crooked hand with the fingers smashed and broken from fighting, real fighting in the years gone by and later in pictures—fights that had thrilled fans all over the world.

The silence began to weigh upon Phyllis like a giant wall crushing out her breath.

Just when she thought she must scream, Tim Hale rose and walked over to her.

His big hands picked her up by the back of the neck, like a kitten. He held her out from him at arm's length, so that her feet—he was a big man, Tim Hale—did not touch the floor. Her eyes, blue eyes gone almost vacant with fright and amazement—were on a level with his own.

He did not shake her. Only held her there.

When he spoke his voice was expressionless, flat, as though he were speaking to a servant from a distance. It broke the remnant of Phyllis's nerve and she began to whimper.

"Stop that! Mrs. Tim Hale. So that was it. You miserable little—kitten, you. Did you promise me you'd never go back on the screen again? Did you promise me to stay home and make a home and have children for me, like you know I wanted? Did you?"

(Continued on page 116)

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

Wherein

Bertie

Comes up

Smiling

Aunt

Agatha

Makes a

Bloomer

Illustrations by
T. D. Skidmore



The girl darted at me so dashed sudden and unexpected I'm bound to say the thing rattled me.

I SAY, have you ever noticed a rather rummy thing about life? I mean the way something nearly always comes along to give it to you in the neck at the very moment when you're feeling most braced about things in general. I know it's like that with me. Fate always seems to wait till I'm in a particularly chirpy mood before heaving the brickbat. Makes an absolute pessimist of a chap.

One morning in January I was having my bath and it suddenly struck me so forcibly that I hadn't a worry in the world that I began to sing like a bally nightingale as I splashed the sponge about. It seemed to me that everything was absolutely for the best in the best of all possible worlds. To top it all off, my Aunt Agatha had gone to the south of France and wouldn't be on hand to snooter me for at least another six weeks. I was conscious of a feeling of perfect peace and contentment. Absolutely.

I might have known it wouldn't last. No sooner had I dried the old limbs and shoved on the suiting and toddled into the sitting room than the blow fell. There was a letter from Aunt Agatha on the mantelpiece.

"Oh gosh!" I said when I'd read it.

"Sir?" said Jeeves.

"It's from my Aunt Agatha, Jeeves. Mrs. Gregson, you know."

"Yes, sir?"

"Ah, you wouldn't speak in that light, careless tone if you knew what was in it," I said with a hollow, mirthless laugh.

"The curse has come upon us, Jeeves. She wants me to go and join her at—what's the name of the dashed place?—at Roville-sur-mer. Oh, hang it all!"

"I had better be packing, sir?"

"I suppose so."

To people who don't know my Aunt Agatha I find it extraordinarily difficult to explain why it is that she has always put the wind up me to such a frightful extent. I mean, I'm not dependent on her financially or anything like that. It's simply personality, I've come to the conclusion. You see, all through my childhood and when I was a kid at school she was always able to turn me inside out with a single glance, and I haven't

come out from under the 'fluence yet. We run to height a bit in our family, and there's about five-foot-nine of Aunt Agatha, topped off with a beaky nose, an eagle eye and a lot of gray hair, and the general effect is pretty formidable. Anyway, it never even occurred to me for a moment to give her the miss-in-baulk on this occasion.

"What's the idea, Jeeves? I wonder why she wants me."

"I could not say, sir."

Well, it was no good talking about it. The only gleam of consolation, the only bit of blue among the clouds, was the fact that at Roville I should at last be able to wear the rather fruity cummerbund I had bought six months ago and had never had the nerve to put on. One of those silk contrivances, you know, which you tie round your waist instead of a waistcoat, something on the order of a sash only more substantial. I had never been able to muster up the courage to put it on so far, for I knew that there would be trouble with Jeeves when I did, it being a pretty brightish scarlet. Still, at a place like Roville, presumably dripping with the gaiety and *joie de vivre* of France, it seemed to me that something might be done.

Roville, which I reached early in the morning after a beastly choppy crossing and a jerky night in the train, is a fairly nifty

Aunt Agatha Makes a Bloomer

spot where a chappie without encumbrances in the shape of aunts might spend a somewhat genial week or so. It is like all these South Coast of France places, mainly sands and hotels and casinos. The hotel which had had the bad luck to draw Aunt Agatha's custom was the Splendide, and by the time I got there there wasn't a member of the staff who didn't seem to be feeling it deeply. I sympathized with them. I've had experience of Aunt Agatha at hotels before. Of course she had got the whole gang nicely under control by now. The manager, a whiskered cove who looked like a bandit, simply tied himself into knots whenever she looked at him.

All this triumph had produced a sort of grim geniality in her, and she was almost motherly when we met.

"I am so glad you were able to come Bertie," she said. "The air will do you so much good. Far better for you than spending your time in stuffy London night clubs."

"Oh, ah!" I said.

"You will meet some pleasant people, too. I want to introduce you to a Miss Hemmingway and her brother, who have become great friends of mine. I am sure you will like Miss Hemmingway. A nice, quiet, girl, so different from so many of the bold girls one meets in London nowadays. Her brother is curate at Chipley-in-the-Glen in Dorsetshire. He tells me they are connected with the Kent Hemmingways. A very good family. She is a charming girl."

I had a grim foreboding of an awful doom. All this boosting was so unlike Aunt Agatha, who normally is one of the most celebrated right and left hand knockers in London Society. I felt a clammy suspicion. And by Jove, I was right.

"Aline Hemmingway," said Aunt Agatha, "is just the girl I should like to see you marry, Bertie. You ought to be thinking of getting married. Marriage might make something of you. And I could not wish you a better wife than dear Aline. She would be such a good influence in your life."

"Here, I say!" I said, chilled to the marrow.

"Bertie!" said Aunt Agatha, dropping the motherly manner for a bit and giving me the cold eye.

"Yes, but I say . . ."

"I hope you do not intend to be foolish and obstinate and . . . But here they are . . . Aline, dear!"

I perceived a girl and a chappie bearing down on me, smiling in a pleased sort of manner.

"I want you to meet my nephew, Bertie Wooster," said Aunt Agatha. "He has just arrived. Such a surprise! I had no notion that he intended coming to Roville."

I gave the couple the wary up-and-down, feeling rather like a cat in the middle of a lot of hounds. Sort of trapped feeling, you know what I mean.

The brother was a small round cove with a face rather like a sheep. He wore pince-nez, his expression was benevolent, and he had on one of those collars which button at the back.

"Welcome to Roville, Mr. Wooster," he said.

"Oh, Sidney!" said the girl. "Doesn't Mr. Wooster remind you of Canon Blenkinsop, who came to Chipley to preach last Easter?"

"My dear! The resemblance is most striking!"

They peered at me for a while as if I were something in a glass case, and I goggled back and had a good look at the girl. There's no doubt about it, she was different from what Aunt Agatha had called the bold girls one meets in London nowadays. No

bobbed hair and gaspers about her! I don't know when I've met anybody who looked so—respectable is the only word. She had on a kind of plain dress, and her hair was plain, and her face was sort of mild and saint-like. I don't pretend to be good old Sherlock Holmes or anything of that order, but the moment

I looked at her I said to myself, "That girl plays the organ in a village church!"

Well, we gazed at one another for a bit, and there was a certain amount of chit-chat, and then I tore myself away. But before I went I had been booked up to take brother and the girl for a nice drive that afternoon. And the thought of it depressed me to such an extent that I felt there was only one thing to be done. I went straight back to my room, dug out the cummerbund and draped it round the old tum. I turned round and Jeeves shied like a startled mustang.

"I beg you pardon, sir," he said in a sort of hushed voice. "You are surely not proposing to appear in public in that thing?"

"The cummerbund?" I said in a careless, debonair way, passing it off. "Oh, rather!"

"I should not advise it, sir, really I shouldn't."

"Why not?"

"The effect, sir, is loud in the extreme."

I tackled the blighter squarely. I mean to say, nobody knows better than I do that Jeeves is a master mind and all that, but, dash it, a fellow must call his soul his own. You can't

be a serf to your valet. Besides, I was feeling pretty low and the cummerbund was the only thing which could cheer me up.

"You know, the trouble with you, Jeeves," I said, "is that you're too—what's the word I want?—too bally insular. You can't realize that you aren't in Piccadilly all the time. In a place like this a bit of color and touch of the poetic is expected."

"Nevertheless, sir—"

"Jeeves," I said firmly, "my mind is made up. I am feeling a little low spirited and need cheering. Besides, what's wrong with it?"

This cummerbund seems to me to be called for. I consider that it has rather a Spanish effect. A touch of the hidalgo. Sort of Vicente y Blasco What's-his-name stuff. The jolly old hidalgo off to the bull fight."

"Very good, sir," said Jeeves coldly.

Dashed upsetting, this sort of thing. Coming on top of Aunt Agatha's bomb shell about the Hemmingway girl, I don't mind confessing it made me feel more or less as though nobody loved me.

The drive that afternoon was about as moldy as I had expected. The curate chappie prattled on of this and that; the girl admired the view; and I got a headache early in the proceedings which started at the soles of my feet and got worse all the way up. I tottered back to my room to dress for dinner, feeling like a toad under the harrow. If it hadn't been for that cummerbund business earlier in the day I could have sobbed on Jeeves's neck and poured out all my troubles to him. Even as it was, I couldn't keep the thing entirely to myself.

"I say, Jeeves," I said, "mix me a stiffish brandy and soda."

"Yes, sir."

"Stiffish, Jeeves. Not too much soda, but splash the brandy about a bit."

After imbibing, I felt a shade better.

"Jeeves," I said, "I rather fancy I'm in the soup, Jeeves."

"Indeed, sir?"



She was different from the bold girls one meets nowadays.

I eyed the man narrowly. Dashed aloof his manner was. Still brooding over the cummerbund.

"Yes. Right up to the hocks," I said, suppressing the pride of the Woosters and trying to induce him to be a bit matier. "Have you seen a girl popping about here with a parson brother?"

"Miss Hemmingway, sir? Yes, sir."

"Aunt Agatha wants me to marry her."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Well, what about it?"

"Sir?"

"I mean, have you anything to suggest?"

"No, sir."

The blighter's manner was so cold and unchummy that I bit the bullet and had a dash at being airy.

"Oh well, tra-la-la!" I said.

"Precisely, sir," said Jeeves.

And that was, so to speak, that.

I remember—it must have been when I was at school because I don't go in for that sort of things very largely nowadays—reading a poem or something about something or other in which there was a line which went, if I've got it rightly, "Shades of the prison house begin to close upon the growing boy." Well, what I'm driving at is that during the next two weeks that's exactly how it was with me. I mean to say, I could hear the wedding bells chiming faintly in the distance and getting louder and louder every day, and how the deuce to slide out of it was more than I could think. Jeeves, no doubt, could have dug up a dozen brainy schemes in a couple of minutes, but he was still aloof and chilly and I couldn't bring myself to ask him point-blank.

It really was rummy the way the Hemmingway family had taken to me. I wouldn't have said offhand that there was anything particularly fascinating about me—in fact, most people look on me as rather an ass; but there was no getting away from the fact that I went like a breeze with this girl and her brother. They didn't seem happy if they were away from me. I couldn't move a step, dash it, without one of them popping out from somewhere and freezing on. In fact, I'd got into the habit now of retiring to my room when I wanted to take it easy for a bit.

I had gone to earth in my suite one evening and for the first time that day was feeling that life wasn't so bad after all. Right through the day from lunch time I'd had the Hemmingway girl on my hands, Aunt Agatha having shoed us off together immediately after the midday meal. The result was, as I looked down on the lighted promenade and saw all the people popping happily about on their way to dinner and the Casino and what not, a kind of wistful feeling came over me. I couldn't help thinking how dashed happy I could have contrived to be in this place if only Aunt Agatha and the other blisters had been elsewhere.

I heaved a sigh, and at that moment there was a knock at the door. "Someone at the door, Jeeves," I said.

"Yes, sir."

He opened the door, and in popped Aline Hemmingway and her brother. The last persons I had expected. I mean to say, I had thought that I could be alone for a minute in my own room.

"Oh, hullo!" I said.

"Oh, Mr. Wooster!" said the girl in a gasping sort of way. "I don't know how to begin."

Then I noticed that she appeared considerably rattled, and as for the brother, he looked like a sheep with a secret sorrow.

This made me sit up a bit and take notice.

"Is anything up?" I said.

"Poor Sidney—it was my fault—I ought never to have let him go there alone," said the girl. Dashed agitated.

At this point the brother, who after shedding a floppy overcoat and parking his hat on a chair had been standing by wrapped in the silence, gave a little cough, like a sheep caught in the mist on a mountain top.

"The fact is, Mr. Wooster," he said, "a sad, a most deplorable thing has occurred. This afternoon, while you were so kindly escorting my sist-ah, I found the time hang a little heavy upon my hands and I was tempted to—ah—gamble at the Casino."

I looked at the man in a kindlier spirit than I had been able to up to date. This evidence that he had sporting blood in his veins made him seem more human, I'm bound to say. If only I'd known earlier that he went in for that sort of thing I felt that we might have had a better time together.

"Oh!" I said. "Did you click?"

He sighed heavily.

"If you mean was I successful, I must answer in the negative. I rashly persisted in the view that the color red, having appeared no fewer than seven times in succession, must inevitably at no distant date give place to black. I was in error. I lost my little all, Mr. Wooster."

"Tough luck," I said. "I left the Casino,"

proceeded the chappie, "and returned to the hotel. There I encountered one of my parishioners, a Colonel Musgrave, who chanced to be holiday making over here. I—er—induced him to cash me a check for one hundred pounds on my little account in my London bank."

"Well, that was all to the good, what?" I said, hoping to induce the poor fish to look on the bright side. "I mean, bit of luck finding someone to slip it into first crack out of the box."

"On the contrary, Mr. Wooster, it did but make matters worse. I burn with shame as I make the confession, but I immediately went back to the Casino and lost the entire sum—this time under the mistaken supposition that the color black was, as I believe the expression is, due for a run."

"I say!" I said. "You are having a night out!"

"And," concluded the chappie, "the most lamentable feature of the whole affair is that I have no funds in the bank to meet the check when presented."

I'm free to confess that, though I realized by this time that all this was leading up to a touch and that my ear was shortly going to be bitten in no uncertain manner, my heart warmed to the poor prune. Indeed, I gazed at him with no little interest and admiration. Never before had I encountered a curate so genuinely all to the mustard.

"Colonel Musgrave," he went on, gulping somewhat, "is not a man who would be likely to overlook the matter. He is a hard man. He will expose me to my vic-ah. My vic-ah is a hard man. In short, Mr. Wooster, if Colonel Musgrave presents that check I shall be ruined. And he leaves for England tonight."

The girl, who had been standing by biting her handkerchief and gurgling at intervals while the brother got the above off his chest, now started in once more.



"Oh, Great Scott!" I said. "don't tell me there's been dirty work at the crossroads!"

Aunt Agatha Makes a Bloomer

"Mr. Wooster," she cried, "won't you, won't you help us? Oh, do say you will! We must have the money to get back the check from Colonel Musgrave before nine o'clock—he leaves on the nine-twenty. I was at my wits' end what to do when I remembered how kind you had always been. Mr. Wooster, will you lend Sidney the money and take these as security?" And before I knew what she was doing she had dived into her bag, produced a case, and opened it. "My pearls," she said. "I don't know what they are worth—they were a present from my poor father . . ."

"Now, alas, no more . . ." chipped in the brother.

"But I know they must be worth ever so much more than the amount we want."

Dashed embarrassing. Made me feel like a pawnbroker.

"No, I say, really," I protested. "There's no need of any security, you know, or any rot of that kind. Only too glad to let you have the money. I've got it on me, as a matter of fact. Rather luckily drew some this morning."

And I fished it out and pushed it across. The brother shook his head.

"Mr Wooster," he said, "we appreciate your generosity, your heartening confidence in us, but we cannot permit this."

"What Sidney means," said the girl, "is that you really don't know anything about us when you come to think of it. You mustn't risk lending all this money without any security at all to two people, who, after all, are almost strangers. If I hadn't thought that you would be quite businesslike about this I would never have dared to come to you."

"The idea of—er—pledging the pearls at the local Mont de Piété was, you will readily understand, repugnant to us," said the brother.

"If you will just give me a receipt, as a matter of form—"

"Oh, right-o!"

I wrote out the receipt and handed it over, feeling more or less of an ass. "Here you are," I said.

The girl took the piece of paper, shoved it in her bag, grabbed the money and slipped it to brother Sidney, and then, before I knew what was happening, she had darted at me, kissed me, and legged it from the room.

I'm bound to say the thing rattled me. So dashed sudden and unexpected. I mean, a girl like that. Always been quiet and demure and what not—by no means the sort of female you'd have expected to go about the place kissing fellows. Through a sort of mist I could see that Jeeves had appeared from the back-

ground and was helping the brother on with his coat. Then the brother came up to me and grasped my hand.

"I cannot thank you sufficiently, Mr. Wooster!"

"Oh, right-o!"

"You have saved my good name. Good name in man or woman, dear my lord," he said, massaging the fin with some fervor, "is the immediate jewel of their souls. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Good night, Mr Wooster."

"Good night, old thing," I said. I blinked at Jeeves as the door shut. "Rather a sad affair, Jeeves," I said.

"Yes, sir."

"Lucky I happened to have all that money handy."

"Well—er—yes, sir."

"You speak as though you didn't think much of it."

"It is not my place to criticize your actions, sir, but I will venture to say that I think you behaved a little rashly."

"What, lending that money?"

"Yes, sir. These fashionable French watering places are notoriously infested by dishonest characters."

This was a bit too thick.

"Now look here, Jeeves," I said, "I can stand a lot but when it comes to your casting asp-whatever-the-word-is on a bird in Holy Orders—"

"Perhaps I am over-suspicious, sir. But I have seen a great deal of these resorts. When I was in the employment of Lord Frederick Ranelagh, shortly before I entered your service, his lordship was very neatly swindled by a criminal known, I believe, by the sobriquet of Soapy Sid, who scraped acquaintance with us in Monte Carlo with the assistance of a female accomplice. I have never forgotten the circumstance and never shall."

"I don't want to butt in on your reminiscences, Jeeves,"

I said, coldly, "but you're talking through your hat. How can there have been anything fishy about this business? They've left me the pearls, haven't they? Very well, then, think before you speak. You had better be tooling down to the desk now and having these things shoved in the hotel safe." I picked up the case and opened it. "Oh, Great Scott!"

The bally thing was empty!

"Oh, my Lord!"

I said, staring. "Don't tell me there's been dirty work at the crossroads after all!"

"Precisely, sir. It was in exactly the same manner that Lord Frederick was swindled on the occasion to which I have alluded. While his female accomplice was gratefully embracing his lord-

ship, Soapy Sid substituted a duplicate case for the one containing the pearls and went off with the jewels, the money and the receipt. On the strength of the receipt he subsequently demanded from his lordship the return of the pearls, and his lordship, not being able to produce them, was obliged to pay a heavy sum in compensation. It is a simple but effective ruse."



Aunt Agatha simply deflated before my eyes. "Where—where—where—" she gurgled.

I felt as if the bottom had dropped out of things with a jerk. "Soapy Sid? Sid! Sidney! Brother Sidney! Why, by Jove, Jeeves, do you think that parson was Soapy Sid?"

"Yes, sir."

"But it seems so extraordinary. Why, his collar buttoned at the back—I mean, he would have deceived a bishop. Do you really think he was Soapy Sid?"

"Yes, sir. I recognized him directly he came into the room."

I stared at the blighter. "You recognized him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, dash it all," I said, deeply moved, "I think you might have told me."

"I thought it would save disturbance and unpleasantness if I merely abstracted the case from the man's pocket as I assisted him with his coat, sir. Here it is."

He laid another case on the table beside the dud one, and by Jove you couldn't tell them apart. I opened it and there were the good old pearls, as merry and bright as dammit, smiling up at me. I gazed feebly at the man. I was feeling a bit overwrought.

"Jeeves," I said. "You're an absolute genius!"

"Yes, sir."

Relief was surging over me in great chunks by now. Thanks to Jeeves I was not going to be called on to cough up several thousand quid.

"It looks to me as though you had saved the old home. I mean, even a chappie endowed with the immortal rind of dear old Sid is hardly likely to have the nerve to come back and retrieve these little chaps."

"I should imagine not, sir."

"Well, then—Oh, I say, you don't think they are just paste or anything like that?"

"No, sir. These are genuine pearls, and extremely valuable."

"Well, then, dash it, I'm on velvet. Absolutely reclining on the good old plush! I may be down a hundred quid but I'm up a jolly good string of pearls. Am I right or wrong?"

"Hardly that, sir. I think that you will have to restore the pearls."

"What! To Sid? Not while I have my physique!"

"No, sir. To their rightful owner."

"But who is their rightful owner?"

"Mrs. Gregson, sir."

"What! How do you know?"

"It was all over the hotel an hour ago that Mrs. Gregson's pearls had been abstracted. I was speaking to Mrs. Gregson's maid shortly before you came in and she informed me that the manager of the hotel is now in Mrs. Gregson's suite."

"And having a devil of a time, what?"

"So I should be disposed to imagine, sir."

The situation was beginning to unfold before me. "I'll go and give them back to her, eh? It'll put me one up, what?"

"Precisely, sir. And I think it might be judicious to stress the fact that they were stolen by . . ."

"Great Scott! By the dashed girl she was hounding me on to marry, by Jove!"

"Exactly, sir."

"Jeeves," I said, "this is going to be the biggest score off my jolly old relative that has ever occurred in history."

"I fancy so, sir."

"Keep her quiet for a bit, what? Make her stop snootering me for a while?"

"It should have that effect, sir."

"Golly!" I said, bounding for the door.

Long before I reached Aunt Agatha's lair I could tell that the hunt was up. Divers chappies in hotel uniform and not a few chambermaids of sorts were hanging about in the corridor and through the panels I could hear a mixed assortment of voices, with Aunt Agatha's topping the lot. I knocked but no one took any notice, so I trickled in. Among those present I noticed a chambermaid in hysterics, Aunt Agatha with her hair bristling, and the whiskered cove who looked like a bandit, the hotel manager fellow.

"Oh, hullo!" I said. "Hullo-ullo-ullo!"

Aunt Agatha shooshed me away.

"Don't bother me now, Bertie," she snapped, looking at me as if I were more or less the last straw.

"Something up?" I asked carelessly.

"Yes, yes, yes! I've lost my pearls."

"Pearls? Pearls? Pearls?" I said. "No, really? Dashed annoying. Where did you see them last?"

"What does it matter where I saw them last? They have been stolen."

Here Wilfred, the Whisker King, who seemed to have been taking a rest between rounds, stepped into the ring again and began to talk rapidly in French. Cut to the quick he seemed. The chambermaid whooped in the corner.

"Sure you've looked everywhere?" I said.

"Of course I've looked everywhere."

"Well, you know, I've often lost a collar stud and—"

"Do try not to be so maddening, Bertie! I have enough to bear without your imbecilities. Oh, be quiet! Be quiet!" she shouted in the sort of voice used by sergeant-majors and those who call the cattle home across the Sands of Dee. And such was the magnetism of her forceful personality that Wilfred subsided as if he had run into a wall. The chambermaid continued to go strong.

"I say," I said, "I think there's something the matter with this girl. Isn't she crying or something? You may not have spotted it, but I'm rather quick at noticing things."

"She stole my pearls! I am convinced of it."

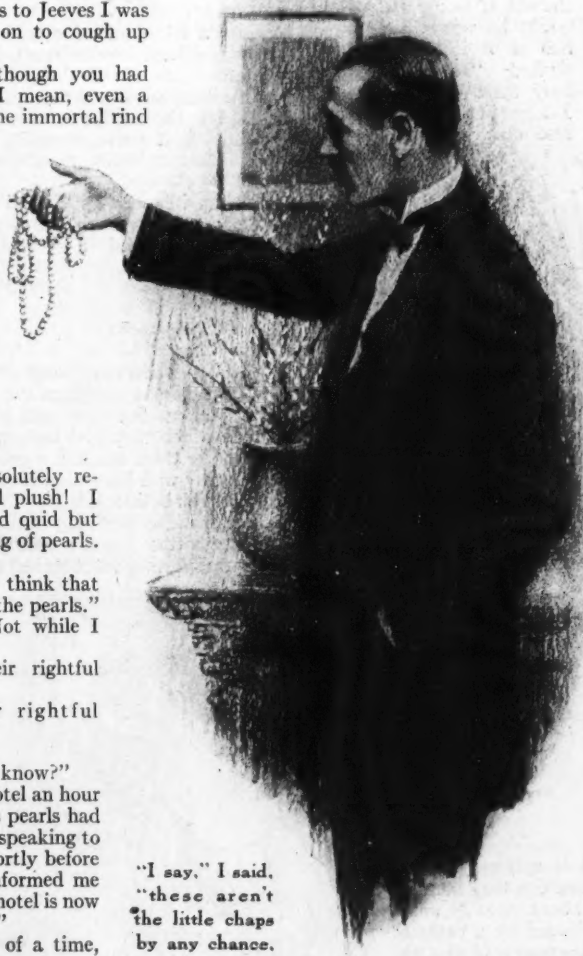
This started the whisker specialist off again, and in about a couple of minutes Aunt Agatha had reached the frozen grande-dame stage and was putting the last of the bandits through it in the voice she usually reserves for snubbing waiters in restaurants.

"I tell you, my good man, for the hundredth time . . ."

"I say," I said, "don't want to interrupt you and all that sort of thing, but these aren't the little chaps by any chance?" I pulled the pearls out of my pocket and held them up. "These look like pearls, what?"

I don't know when I've had a more juicy moment. It was one of those occasions about which I shall prattle to my grandchildren—if I ever have any, which at the moment of going to press seems more or less of a hundred-to-one shot. Aunt Agatha simply deflated before my eyes. "Where—where—where—" she gurgled.

"I got them from your friend Miss (Continued on page 160)



"I say," I said, "these aren't the little chaps by any chance. are they?"

Stories That Have Made Me Laugh

Illustrations by

THERE is an old story—so old that it may be new—of the well known actor who was summoned to his old home in Ohio to attend the funeral of his father. A few days later he was seen around the Lambs Club in deep mourning and with a facial expression appropriate to the loss he had sustained. Many of the members shook his hand in silent sympathy, but one of them by way of making conversation asked the actor if there had been many people at the funeral.

"Many people!" the mourner exclaimed. "My dear boy! We turned them away. We turned them away!"

LAST week in Los Angeles and vicinity there was a grand revival of the following story:

An Irishman from southern California was visiting his married brother in New York.

"Pat," he said—or perhaps he was an adherent of the Gaelic movement and said Padraic—"why don't you come out to southern California? With all them three children, New York is a terrible place to live in entirely."



"Well, welcome the will o' God! It might be worse, as bad as it is!" Pat replied. "It's not only three children I've got but another one coming, and

they tell me that out in California every fourth child born there is a Chinaman."

GUS HARRIS of Drury Lane once put on a melodrama where there was a hunt breakfast in the first act and a pawnbroker's shop in the second. At the dress rehearsal a conceited actor who happened to be in the audience said:

"Mr. Harris, in the first act the hunting breeches are all wrong."

"Well," Gus replied, "every man to his knowledge, my lad. The pawnbroker's shop is rotten."

NICKNAMES are too often cruel in their aptness, and the more cruelly appropriate the more humorous they seem to be. Irvin Cobb told of a woman he heard about when he was a police court reporter. Her left eye was blinded by a cataract and she was known as Fog-in-the-East. One poor soul who was badly afflicted with palsy was called by her neighbors Kitty-the-Shakes.

A vaudeville performer, known to her associates because of her obesity as Greasy Grace, had nevertheless no small opinion of her attractiveness. She was wont to advertise in the London Era:

"They may pinch my talent, but they can't spoil my beauty." She then continued to say:

"What price this, you blooming kippers?"

"Went better than ever at Bolton last week. All dates filled for two years!!!"

However, she added the inharmonious postscript: "Monday next unexpectedly vacant. Wire offers."

SPEAKING of wiring offers, one of A. H. Woods's touring companies—"Early To Bed" I believe the name of the play was—found itself in Cincinnati minus a character comedian who had not taken the Eighteenth Amendment somewhat too seriously.

The company manager at once telegraphed to a character comedian in New York who had been well known in the early 'nineties but not particularly sought after in the nineties and twenties. The wire read as follows:

"We need character comedian to open in Cincinnati Monday. Will you accept part and if so please wire lowest terms."

Two hours later the company manager received a telegram containing the one word:

"Coming."

NEVER throw away a silk hat or a cutaway coat no matter how obsolete the shape. Sooner or later it will come into style again; and this applies with no less force to humorous anecdotes.

Last summer a friend of mine told me that when another friend of his was a little boy he was taken by his father to see the funeral procession of Abraham Lincoln. They stood on the curb as the long line of soldiers passed down Pennsylvania Avenue and at last the catafalque upon which reposed the body came into sight. As it arrived opposite where the little boy was standing, his father suddenly gave him a tremendous box on the right ear.

It knocked him into the gutter and when he arose weeping he demanded to know what it was for.

"My son," the father said, "I gave you that box on the ear so that when you grow up you will remember how when you were a little boy you saw the funeral of the great Abraham Lincoln."

IN THE "Life of Benvenuto Cellini," who was born in 1500 A.D., Chapter I, page 13, appears the following:

"When I was about five years old, being in our small cellar in which they had been washing the clothes, and where there was still a good fire of oak boughs, my father with his viol in his arms played and sang to himself beside that fire. It was very cold; and as he gazed into the fire by chance he saw in the midst of the hottest flames a little animal like a lizard which was sporting about amidst the most scorching blaze.



Having immediately perceived what it was, he caused my sister and me to be summoned, and pointing it out to us children he gave me a violent box on the ear, at which I began to cry most excessively. He comforted me kindly, spoke to me thus:

"My dear little son, I did not give you that blow on account of anything that you have done, but only that you may remember that that lizard which you saw in the fire is a salamander, a creature that has never been seen by

anyone else of whom we may have reliable information."

"So he kissed me and gave me some coppers."

I CULLED the following one from Hibbert's "Fifty Years of a Londoner's Life":

When William Holland took over the Canterbury Music Hall

By MONTAGUE GLASS

REA IRVIN

he covered the entire floor with a carpet of quality. One of his advisors remonstrated. The rude fellows affecting the pit would surely spit on it. The instinct of one of the greatest English showmen was aroused. Half London was gazing in a few hours at this invitation on the hoardings:

Come and spit on Bill Holland's thousand guinea carpet.

TO THE clumsy, tactless people who are always "treading on other people's corns" but nevertheless have good hearts, the following definition of a gentleman is recommended: "A gentleman," said President Taft, "is a person who never hurts anybody's feelings unintentionally."

SAMUEL BUTLER who lived and died a bachelor but was in other things quite fearless, always defended the telling of lies if done to any good or useful purpose. He relates the following, as an example probably:

"When I take my Sunday walks in the country I try to buy a few really new laid eggs from the nest. At this time of the year (January) they are very hard to come by, and I have long since invented a sick wife who has implored me to get her a few eggs laid not earlier than the self-same morning. Of late as I am getting older it has become my daughter who has just had a little baby. This will generally draw a new laid egg, if there is one about the place at all.

"At Harrow Weald it has always been my wife who for years has been a great sufferer and finds a really new laid egg the one thing she can digest in the way of solid food. So I turned her on as movingly as I could not long since, and was at last sold some eggs that were no better than common shop eggs, if so good. Next time I went I said my poor wife had been made seriously ill by them; it was no good trying to deceive her; she could tell a new laid egg from a bad one as well as any woman in London, and she had such a high temper that it was very unpleasant for me when she found herself disappointed.

"Ah! sir," said the landlady, 'but you would not like to lose her.' "Ma'am," I replied, 'I must not allow my thoughts to wander in that direction. But it's no use bringing her stale eggs, anyhow.'"

YOU remember Ginger Dick, Peter Russet and Sam Small who figure so prominently in W. W. Jacobs's amusing stories.

"They 'ad took a room together as usual," says

the Night Watchman in the story "Self Help," "and for the first two or three days they was like brothers. That couldn't last, o' course, and Sam was so annoyed one evening at Ginger's suspiciousness in biting a 'arf dollar Sam owed 'im and finding it was a bad 'un, that 'e went off to spend the evening all alone by 'imself."

THAT type of indignation reminds me of an East Broadway furrier; he was the sort of bank depositor who in a moment of unjustified optimism will draw against his depleted balance in the desperate hope that something will happen to make the check good before it is presented. One day recently he gave a check for fifteen dollars to an out of town creditor and a few days later it was returned to the drawee dishonored. He immediately took it up to the place of business of the furrier. "Say, looky here," the creditor protested, "you gave me last

week a check on the Kosciusko National Bank and they returned it to me marked *No Funds.*"

"No funds?" the furrier exclaimed. "Well, that only goes to show what a terrible condition the business of the country is in when a big bank like the Kosciusko National is so short that it ain't got the funds to pay a little check for fifteen dollars."

LAST week I dined with one of the outstanding figures of the moving picture industry. He outstood valiantly in the matter of appetite and conversation, and said among oh so many other things that if the moving picture industry were to be upon a sound financial basis, it was vitally necessary for moving picture manufacturers to find out in advance just what pictures the public wanted and then give them to it. This reminded me immediately of the two London sidewalk fakers who were selling respectively the two toys known as monkey on a stick and the dying pig.

"Ello, Bill," one of them said. "Ow's the monkeys going?"

"Very bad," the other said. "I give you my word, I 'aven't sold one today."

"Ow's the dying pig?"

"Simply 'orrible! 'Aven't 'ad a blessed nibble the 'ole morning," the dying pig peddler replied. He wiped the perspiration from his worried



brow and heaved a profound sigh. "I'm beginning to think as 'ow the bleeding public don't know what it wants!" he concluded.

MORE Samuel Butler. In his "Note Books" he says:

How holy people look when they are sea-sick! There was a patient Parsee near me on the Channel Boat yesterday who seemed purified once and forever from all taint of the flesh. Buddha was a low, worldly minded music

hall comic singer in comparison. He sat like this for a long time . . . and he made a noise like cows coming home to be milked on an April evening.

THERE is the story of the English lady who told her neighbor that her son Jimmy was now an actor.

"An actor!" the neighbor exclaimed. "Fancy that! And what kind of an actor is he?"

"He's a light comedian," the mother said proudly.

"A light comedian!" the neighbor cried. "Him an actor such a short time and acting comic too?"

"Oh, he isn't that kind of a light comedian!" the mother explained. "He stands behind a sheet with a hole in it while his boss shoots a pistol at a lighted candle in front of the hole."

"And how does that make Jimmy a light comedian?" the neighbor asked.

"Well," the mother replied, "every time Jimmy's boss shoots at the candle, Jimmy blows out the light."



REA IRVIN

Upstage

(Continued from page 39)

Sallie had never felt so important, not even the night of her stage debut, for then she had been conscious solely of the fact that she was dancing with no skirt on before a lot of people.

The head waiter helped her out of the ulster. Mr. Patterson then seated himself, and for the first time Sallie saw him under revealing electricity.

His hair, parted at the side and brushed straight from his forehead, gave evidence of having been in boyhood the color affectionately known as "carrots." But frequent use of water and military brushes had charitably darkened it. Remnants of freckles lingered where no amount of hatless motoring could promote more than one coat of tan. Above them, gray eyes not so young as they might have been searched a world with which they were well acquainted. Smiling, they were a boy's. In repose, as old as any frequenter's of stage doors.

Sallie's gaze settled not on his features but on his clothes. Patch pockets slanted across the coat. The waistcoat was high and of the same dark blue material threaded with a hairline of white. From the sleeves she thought rather too short, he shook down blue silk shirt cuffs matched by a soft collar. His blue Persian tie was held in an immaculate four-in-hand by a small pearl scarf pin. The correctness, the perfection of detail, were to Sallie positively thrilling. As he picked up the menu, she noticed that his hands were wide and muscular with no shine on the nails. She was glad he wasn't a dude.

He proceeded to order with the casual ease of one who knows the chef's best dishes. Sallie pulled off her gloves, crossed her arms on the table, leaned forward to listen with a kind of awe. He turned back and as he did so his glance fell on her hand. It riveted there, then slowly traveled upward accompanied by the same low whistle he had emitted as they drove uptown.

"Whew, what a stone!"

"Yes," replied Sallie, "it used to be my mother's."

He stared. After which a knowing twinkle touched his eyes and a laugh, equally knowing, his lips. He said nothing.

"Honestly it was," Sallie protested.

His stare probed her—then came a faint flash of resentment. "I wasn't born yesterday—not quite," he announced.

"Please—please believe me!" Tears started to Sallie's eyes.

"Your mother owned a stone like that, and you had to work in a department store?"

"It does sound funny. But it's true! We never had any money after my father died. Nor before, either. He just saved and saved, and then when he was gone mother just spent and spent. She went crazy spending. She said he never gave us enough to eat when he was alive and she was going to make the best of it now that he was dead. So she went to the savings bank and took out every cent and had a wonderful time—for awhile. Hats and dresses and movies every night. She was awfully pretty—"

"I believe it," came vehemently.

"And she never did have a decent thing

to wear while my father was living. Then one day she came home with this ring. 'Baby,' she said—she always called me her baby—'there's not much left, and before it's all gone I want to be sure you're fixed. If I put it in the bank I'll take it out again, so this way we'll always have something we can hock if we need to.'"

He chuckled then. "And did you ever need to?"

"Often."

Unwittingly, perhaps, his gaze shifted from the diamond to her dress and hat. She needed no intuition to interpret that look. Experience had taught her exactly what it meant. And where defiance had met the girls in the dressing room, a wave of shame now swept over her.

Gazing at him in his immaculate perfection, her fingers twitched to toss the alley cat out of the window. Yet she could not apologize for it. She could not explain that, being her father's daughter, she was banking such of her earnings as could be spared against the day when the sapphire sparkle would fade from her eyes.

As the busboy shook out the glistening white napkin and placed it across her knees, she felt an absurd inclination to slide under the table.

Mr. Patterson's attention, however, had turned to the silver dish of frogs' legs submitted for approval, and Sallie's discomfort vanished in the thrill of a new experience, though she wished he had ordered a nice thick steak.

When they were once more on the Drive he leaned over, quickly freeing one hand, and gave hers a squeeze.

"You're an adorable infant!" he whispered. "Don't know just what to make of you, but you've got me going!"

Sallie looked up a little uncertainly. "My right name is Sallie MacMahon," she stammered.

"I don't care what it is," came tenderly. "My name for you is the same as your mother's—Baby!"

III

"GRACIE, deah—will you gaze!"

Miss Mallard's wide, wondering orbs, accompanied by Grace's, turned toward the door. Sallie MacMahon had just entered, resplendent in spring outfit. Above slim ankles billowed a skirt of silk the color of her eyes. The ankles ended in slippers mounted with buckles of cut steel. Her arms gleamed white through transparent clinging sleeves. A necklace of pearls clasped her throat and over the golden head brimmed a wide hat weighted with roses.

She disrobed nonchalantly, hanging her garments against the sheet that ran round the wall for their protection. She pretended not to see the nudges of the girls, but her heart sang a psalm of triumph.

Now they would stop laughing at her!

Now they would treat her with respect! Yea—weep for her, ye wise ones! Sallie's day had come. She had fallen from grace. Worse, actually reveled in her downfall! That very morning, without a struggle, she had gone to the savings bank and wantonly depleted her little horde. There had followed a wild debauch of spending such

as her own mother had indulged in years before. Silks, laces, chiffons, feathers! Shades of Scotland, the Irish had won out!

And having recklessly started at high speed, she could not stop. She had no desire to. Ridicule she might have gone on enduring, but nightly to sit opposite Mr. James Fowler Patterson in his perfectly tailored clothes, conscious of the variety and extent of them—that had been the straw that broke the backbone of resistance.

Once and once only had Mr. Jimmie essayed the rôle of godfather. Reaching home one evening after a long drive in the moonlight, he had followed her up the ladderlike steps to the dim vestibule and, standing there, had clasped quickly round her wrist a narrow glittering bracelet.

"To match the ring," he had whispered.

Sallie's gaze had fastened on the jewels that laughed up through semi-darkness.

"Oh—I—couldn't!" she breathed at last.

And don't imagine it was easy.

"Please! Just because I want you to."

"But I—I couldn't, Jimmie."

"But if I ask you? I'm crazy about you, Baby. Never was so keen on a girl in my life."

Sallie gulped hard and without looking at it unclasped the clinging circlet.

"Please," he protested as she handed it back. "Please—dear!"

She shook her head decisively.

"But I want to see you in pretty things. I want you to have them."

"Thanks, Jimmie—for wanting to give it to me. But you mustn't—ever do that again. It wouldn't be right for me to take it."

And Jimmie had been forced to content himself with flowers and kid gloves and perfume—French stuff at eight-eighty an ounce.

That phrase of his, however—"I want to see you in pretty things"—clung to her consciousness. She wanted him to see her in them. She wanted to see herself in them. She wanted those girls to see her in them.

After which the savings bank simply flew to meet her.

"Well," observed Miss Mallard, still devouring the new costume. "I'm glad you're learning how to handle him."

Sallie slipped into her chair.

"May we inspect the dog collar, my deah?" Miss Mallard pursued.

With large indifference Sallie handed over the necklace and watched the blue eyes widen. Not hers to inform the lady that it had been purchased at a near pearl establishment guaranteeing that "Our pearls rival the real."

Miss Mariette fingered it lovingly, even to the tiny barrel of brilliants that formed the clasp. "Atta boy!" she breathed and as she returned it let fall upon Sallie a look approaching homage.

"Oh, that's nothing," Sallie found herself saying, drunk with the dazzle of scoring at last against her enemies. "I'm going to get a car of my own soon." And promptly wondered how she was going to get it.

But feminine imagination, given full rein, took the bit between its teeth and galloped beyond Sallie's control. She spoke of champagne supper parties and a

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house on Long Island and sables, with the largesse of an "Arabian Nights." She tasted the sweets of seeing baby blue eyes and impudent black ones dilate with envy as the other girls gathered round. She swept on, heedless of sharp turns ahead, and not until the callboy shouted the half hour did she halt.

At the curb that night she found a gray roadster barking its haste to be off like a pert Pomeranian. Mr. J. F. Patterson stepped out, then stopped short with a gasp as he took in the glory of her. She gave him her hand—and waited. To her amazement he said not a word, merely helped her into the car. It snorted and raced up Broadway. Still not a word! She snuggled into the low seat, turned to look up at him. He was frowning.

"What's the matter, Jimmie?"

"Nothing."

"Something is."

"Nothing, I tell you!" His tone was brusque. The frown settled deeper, bringing brows together.

Sallie's eyes filled. She had pictured something so different—Jimmie bounding with delight when he saw her! Jimmie covering her with admiration!

But his mood did not change. Throughout the ride he brooded, silent, absorbed—though she tried desperately to make conversation.

"Is this a new car, Jimmie?"

"No."

"Why didn't you ever come in it before?"

"In the repair shop."

"Oh!"

Silence.

"I like it."

"Do you?"

"Yes. It's so—so cozy."

"Is it?"

Silence—a long one.

"Jimmie—I—I don't want any supper."

"Why?"

"I—I think I want to go home."

"Just as you say."

"Jimmie—what—what's wrong?"

His eyes scanned the beauty of her, steel buckles, silken dress, rose laden hat. They ended on the glossy pearls and his lips which had opened for speech snapped shut.

He drove her home, without a word lifted his cap.

"Jimmie—please—please don't act that way."

"What way?"

"So—so queer."

He gave a short laugh.

She clapped a hand over her mouth, stared at him, eyes swimming, then fled up the steps.

The following night Mr. Patterson was late for the first time. He swung round the corner just as Sallie appeared. She was wearing a violet suit, fluffy lace collar and cuffs, and a hat of violets. They made her eyes the same color. During a night of tearful and bewildered groping, she had arrived at a conclusion. Jimmie hadn't liked the way she looked! He wasn't pleased with her dress or hat or something. Maybe he didn't think they were becoming and hadn't wanted to hurt her feelings. A lighter color, perhaps, something gayer! After which she rolled over with relief, stole a few hours' sleep, and later embarked on another shopping tour.

But the violet, apparently, made no more satisfactory impression than the

blue. He handed her almost roughly into the car. They shot like a cannon ball into the darkness.

There were no stars. The moon had reached the full, dwindled and slipped round to smile upon the other side of the world.

Sallie gulped, groped for a fitting subject and finally burst out:

"Jimmie, tell me about yourself. You never have told me much."

"Nothing to tell."

"How does it feel to have so much money?" she proceeded for want of something better to say.

The effect was electric. He turned on her. The car jerked to the other side of the road. "You ought to know!"

"I? Stop kidding!"

"Yes, you!"

"But—"

"Look as if you'd come into a Rockefeller income!"

"Well, I haven't."

"No?"

"You know it!"

"I don't know anything about women."

"Well, you ought to know all about me."

"Yes—I ought to." He gave the same ugly laugh of the night before but in his eyes was real pain. "But who knows what to expect of a chorus queen!"

"Jimmie!"

"Oh, what's the use?" came in husky desperation. "Let's be merry!"

Sallie stared, choked and bewildered, into the darkness. She didn't know how to answer, how to act. This new Jimmie, this—this nasty one! He was a stranger. Small teeth settled into her lower lip to halt its trembling.

For three nights they followed the same program—she bewitching in a new costume chosen tearfully to conciliate the mysterious male—he taciturn, unresponsive, answering her labored conversation with husky monosyllables or hard cynicism that hurt without enlightening. Twice during those three days it drizzled, and instead of suggesting supper in the neighborhood as had been their habit in bad weather, he drove the short ten blocks to the weary brownstone house and left her there.

"As if he wanted to get rid of me," sobbed Sallie into her pillow.

To dust and ashes in her mouth turned the sweets of her triumph over the girls. Though she continued to weave stories for their benefit, to elaborate on gifts in the past and the car in the future, to flash her diamond and twirl her pearls, the tang had gone out of it.

By Friday she felt she couldn't stand it another minute. What had she done? Under the glimmering stars she gazed up first in mute pleading, then—

"Jimmie," she choked, "take me home. I—I—guess I'd better—"

The roadster snarled at the tug that sent it round the corner.

"Oh—another date?"

"Maybe!" His tone had brought defiance into hers.

"H'm! Thought so!"

"You—you're horrid!"

"Well—I can't blame you. What chance has a mean little bracelet against a string of oyster tears like that?" The volcano that had been rumbling all week sent up a sudden blinding glare. "Gad, what an ass I've been!" it spat out.

"Don't talk like that—don't!"

"I mean it—a saphead! Swallowed that diamond yarn whole—hook, line and sinker."

"It—it wasn't a yarn!"

"You'll tell me next your mother bought the pearls, too."

"No—I did."

The volcano roared a warning. "God!" A pause while his breath caught.

"It's true, I tell you! I bought them myself—they're imitation."

He flung back his head. His laugh frightened her.

"Oh—won't you believe me?"

"No!"

"Won't you—please?"

"And I put you above them—way on top." The volcano erupted with thunderous crash. "But you're like the rest of them! Price—a string of pearls—a diamond! Sit down! Sit down, I say! I'll get you home soon enough."

White and terrified, she subsided. Words rushed to her lips, clung there.

He crashed on.

"But you did put it over! Had me going so that I'd have staked my life on you. Got me with the baby stare stuff. 'Baby'—huh! It's a lesson—I won't be such a damn fool next time!"

"Jimmie"—the voice struggled to keep steady—"I swear to you—"

"I wouldn't believe you on a stack of Bibles! Down on your luck—thought you had an easy mark. Then something better—pearls—came along—"

"Jimmie—I—I'll never forgive—"

"That's right! Injured innocence—"

"I—I could die this minute!"

"It's tough, though—when the first time a man really—cares—more than he ever thought—" The words halted painfully.

"Oh, won't you listen? Jimmie—you—you had so much—and I—"

"But the other fellow's got more! Like all the rest—"

They stopped with a jump that made the roadster snort in protest.

"You—you don't understand," the sobs clamored to her lips. "Tomorrow—please—please listen—"

She sprang out of the car and up the steps, clinging to the iron rail.

But tomorrow when she hurried out of the stage entrance, eyes darting to the curb, Mr. James Fowler Patterson was not there.

IV

"MY DEAH—what has become of the orange motah?" Miss Mariette turned her round stare on Sallie.

"Oh! He—he's out of town."

"M'm! Been 'out' some time, I take it."

"F-four weeks." Sallie found it impossible to talk these days without a quiver. And the wells that had been her eyes were wept dry.

"When does he return, my deah?"

"Oh, s-soon now, I guess."

"H'm!" Merciless blue eyes took in the small white face, listless shoulders and drooping mouth, while their owner hummed low and languorously, "When I Come Back to You." After which she proceeded, "and the cobbles?"

"What?"

"The dog collar, my deah."

"Oh—I—I p-put it away."

"Ah?"



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What is his health worth?

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FELS-NAPTHA

THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR

"I—it—I thought I'd better not wear it round all the time."

After a moment of slow scrutiny Miss Mariette cast her eyes heavenward. "You were wise, child, not to let him get back the diamond, too," she drawled.

"I d-don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh—d-don't you? My deah, do I look as easy as that? It's plain he's gone his merry way tra-la."

Like a whip Sallie snapped round at her. "He hasn't!"

"Tra-la, tra-la-la!"

"Don't you dare—"

"Then where's the car, tra-la?"

"I told you—"

"The car he was giving you, I mean."

Grace, who had entered in time for the last words, tittered with all the old enjoyment.

"Pcor little car skidded on the way, Gracie, deah," announced Miss Mallard.

Sallie's throat closed in a hard knot. Her head almost dropped on the table. But not quite. Pride kept it up. Pride and the determination never to let them know how right they were.

Yet Miss Mariette Mallard, having resumed her tactics of warfare, allowed to slip no opportunity for attack. She teased and tormented and tra-la'd with purring delight, sharp little talons inflicting new wounds.

Sallie began to slink into the dressing room as if to hide from insinuating smiles, and coming out of the stage door she fairly tore round the corner to escape the torturing vision of that line at the curb.

The pearls she had recklessly let go. After what he had said, she couldn't bear to touch them. The necklace curled in her hand like some wriggling reptile. Her first impulse had been to toss it into an ashcan, but eventually she found herself back at the near pearl shop. A suave salesman after much fingering and testing reminded her that they did not refund on merchandise but added that he might be able to resell at a loss if she cared to leave it. Sallie even hated the money—something more than half the amount she had paid—that his smooth hands finally counted into hers.

One thing though she did determine in the long nights. There must be a car! Never must they be certain that Jimmie had gone for good! But cars, like Pegasus, soar winged in the clouds and June had come gliding into the arms of May while Sallie suffered and waited, lived on bread and milk, and hopelessly priced the cheaper makes.

Other lips, mustached, clean shaven, young and not so young, answered Sallie's plea of "Won't you smile at me?" Sallie did not hear them. Other eyes sought hers from motors at the curb. Sallie did not know they were there.

She was in her room balancing accounts at eleven-thirty P. M. When she did sleep, figures whirled through her dreams, figures and Jimmie's face.

Then in the murky dawn of one June day came an inspiration. Yesterday she had seen a second-hand runabout painted a beautiful blue for only two hundred and fifty dollars with a week's trial before buying. Her diamond! She could get enough on that! A few months in which to tear up to the curb and spring out, to display the shining body to startled eyes, to make

them believe he had come back. Jimmie—who never would! She gazed out through the streaky window pane and for a time the car was forgotten.

When the chorus had assembled for the Wednesday matinée, a ring dropped tinkling to the dressing room floor. Sallie picked it up, proclaimed that the stone had come loose and wore it no more.

Later behind a window barred like a prison, Sallie MacMahon's lips clung together and she looked away as her most precious possession passed into other hands—probably for all time.

At last the night arrived when the girls sighted at the curb a little car blue as the heavens. One of them stepped lightly from the stage entrance, fetched a key from her bag, bent down, paused, then sprang in and took the wheel as though running a motor were a daily pastime.

Miss Mallard stopped in the center of the pavement.

"I'll tell the world!" she breathed, forgetting Fifth Avenue. "She wasn't lying, Grace—she wasn't!"

Sallie MacMahon smiled upon them, put her foot on the self-starter, heard the cheerful chug chug of the engine responding, and with terror chasing down her spine, spun round the corner.

As she disappeared, Grace's reply wafted on the breeze:

"But he's a piker, anyhow. It's as big as a minute!"

Up Broadway, eyes starting with fear, heart pounding, went Sallie. And every instant's progress petrified her. Buildings descended. Motor trucks loomed up. Trolleys tore, gigantic, within an inch of the blue mite that held her. It was completely, totally swamped. For the first time alone in it, she clung wildly to the wheel while all Broadway danced.

Never had she traveled a distance to equal those ten blocks. Never before had the thought of the sagging brownstone house been a welcome one. A century later she reached her own street, turned in. Then something snapped. The runabout stood stock still. Sallie tried to recall the varied instructions of the garage man who had taught her to drive it. Without his guiding hand, they were Greek.

She fled in the direction of a passing policeman, caught his arm. "Please, would you mind? Something's happened. It—it's stuck."

He grinned as he took in the blue mite. "Better go and phone your garage, Miss. I'll take care of it till you get back."

Sallie dropped his arm.

"Why, I—I haven't any—"

"What?"

"Garage."

"What do you do with it at night? Take it to bed with you?"

"N-nothing. It—it's new. I—I never thought—"

"Then find some place to put it—quick. They'll send you a man—"

Sallie stood stock still as the car, then turned on her heel and dashed in the direction of the brownstone house. On the top step she dropped.

Not a cent in the world! Diamond gone! Car that was no good! And no place to put it!!!

Early in her career as a motorist she had discovered that cars have a way of gathering expense like dust by the wayside. There had been extra tires and

repairs even while you were learning to run it. It fairly ate up gas. You needed twice as much as she had reckoned.

And now—this!

Helplessly she gazed at the point far down the block where the policeman stood guard. From time to time his glance roved impatiently—and when at last he swung on his way, leaving the mite unprotected, Sallie knew there was nothing to do but sit there and watch it all through the night.

Then it was that the wells which had run dry filled once more, overflowed. Huddled in a corner of the stoop, she fastened her wilted gaze on a spot of blue parked close to Broadway and wondered what she was going to do with it when morning arrived.

She came to drowsily as a clock struck one and something heavy descended on her shoulder. It pulled her upright, shook the sleep from her eyes and a cry from her lips. The policeman!

"What are you doing out here?"

She strained forward.

"Jimmie! !!"

"What are you doing, I say?"

"Jimmie—is it—is it—you?"

"Answer me!"

"I—I—oh, I can't believe it—you—you!" Then panic seized her. "Jimmie—don't—don't go again. Wait—let me tell you! I've been praying you'd give me the chance to tell you. I—it was true—I did buy all those things myself. I did—I did! I was afraid you'd be ashamed of me."

He stood glaring silently down at her. When his voice did come, it was thick and tense.

"Didn't you know it was just those old clothes of yours that convinced me the story you gave me was straight?"

"But the girls always made fun of them—and I wanted to look right for you. And you thought—oh, Jimmie, what you thought has nearly killed me!"

"What could a man who knew his Broadway think when you appeared all of a sudden in a million dollars' worth of finery?"

"But it wasn't true! I took all my money out of the bank to look nice just for you. Jimmie—if you go again—the way you did—I—I'll die!"

He gave no direct answer. Instead, he gripped her shoulders until they ached.

"What are you doing out here this time of night? Answer me that!"

The car! Her eyes raced down the block. There it stood, untouched.

"I—I hocked my diamond, Jimmie, and bought a car. I made the girls think you were going to give me one and I didn't want them to know that you—you—" She turned away. "So I hocked the ring—and—and got—that—"

He followed her eyes to where a spot of blue reposed near the corner.

"And now it won't go and I haven't any money to put it anywhere. They've been keeping it for me where I bought it and I never thought about garaging. So—so when it broke down, I just had to sit here and watch it all night."

The rushing words halted. She looked up at the face bent above hers. If Mr. James Fowler Patterson had a sense of humor—and he had—the comedy of the present situation failed to bring it to light. He stood and gazed down into the small

Pastel colors, sheer cobwebby weaves—

Your silk underthings will last longer washed this way, says Van Raalte

THE smart silhouette demands them, these sheer cobwebby underthings that breathe Paris. They are irresistible in their pastel daintiness, and filet lace, their delicate ribbons and picot edging.

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We had street stockings in black, brown and grey, and evening stockings in cerise, emerald, and pale blue washed in Lux. Each pair of stockings was given the number of laundings the average stockings receive.

The stockings were still in excellent condition at the end of the washings. The color changes were not noticeable and the silk was in good condition, strong, springy, and with no frayed or broken threads such as appear when rubbing is necessary or when a harsh soap is used.

The excellent results we obtained with Lux were due only in part to the fact that it does away with rubbing; the main factor in our minds is its mildness and purity. If silk hose are washed, following the directions, with Lux after each wearing they will give longer service.

Very truly yours,
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No silk undergarment gets harder usage than a vest, so we had three flesh colored silk vests, of sheer, medium and heavy quality, laundered in Lux the average number of times an undergarment is washed before it wears out.

The vests lost astonishingly little color - there was practically no fading. In fact, at the end of the washings, they were about as soft and lustrous as when new.

We attribute our success with Lux especially to its purity. A very harsh soap or soap flake is ruinous to silk. The mild Lux lather cleanses so quickly and with such gentleness that it is impossible for it to injure the garment. We are glad to recommend it to the women who wear our silk underwear.

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tired face lifted with such desperate appeal.

"I——"
"Jimmie, won't you believe me this time—please?"

He bent closer. "If I tell you I could take a gun this minute and blow out what little brains I've got, will you believe me? Will you?" He did not give her time to answer. "I deserve it—shooting's too good. Why, even if you dressed up like a Christmas window, only a saphead that's wasted all his life chasing up and down Broadway could have made such a mistake. What's love, anyhow? And sweetheart—I do love you. These weeks without you have proved how much."

She closed her eyes as the words came. "Why," he plunged on, "my dad had given me up as a bad job—said he was through! And six weeks ago I went to him and told him I'd found the girl who could make a man of me—asked him to take me on at the Patterson Iron Works, I didn't care in what capacity. He thought I was joking—but I put on overalls and rolled up my sleeves. Because I wanted

to be good enough for you. That was just about the time you showed up in all that gorgeousness. And I let the idea get hold of me—Don't cry, honey, I can't stand it!" There was an instant of potent silence, then:

"How did you happen to come past here tonight—Jimmie?" came smothered.

"I've been coming past here every night."

"Then why—why did you stay away from the theater?"

"I didn't—for long. Wanted to—but couldn't! I've watched you come out from around the corner——" He broke off. "Sweetness—you've been looking awfully sick."

"I've been awfully lonesome."

He lifted her chin.

"Baby——"

"Yes, Jimmie—dear——"

"Will you forgive me?"

"Jimmie——"

"Yes, Baby—dear——"

"Will you wait here till I get into my old rig, then take me for a ride in my new car?"

The Lightning Rod

(Continued from page 51)

without nobody noticing and clomb in the dark all the way to the top.

Hardly had I flung myself down under the mouth of the bell when somebody started to ring it for an alarm. It hit me on the head and I had to crouch down to keep it from knocking me overboard. The bang of it like to deafened me and the big tongue was like a hammer hitting at my skull like I once—but—well—I had to laugh at the joke of it though. The whole dam town chasing everywhere after me and somebody way down there dancing on the rope that told the bell that told the town. I suppose it is no time to laugh but I cant help my sense of humor any more than I could help any other of my senses.

Byneby the bell stopped banging but it kind of groaned and whispered a long while around the rim. But everything is quiet now.

On my way up here I stumbled over a lot of old hymn books in the attic. They were throwed out I guess because the docturns they set to music are out of stile. The blood thirsty sentiments that nice fokes used to sing in church dont go no longer.

My soul is like this steeple. It climbs high and aims at Heaven but don't get that fur. The old earth holds it back. The poor steeple wants to be good but even the archotek stole the desine off somebody else and the carpenters and masons cheated when they bilt it.

The soul of the church is the congergation. This congergation meant well and wanted to be good but its own presher was always roasting it for hipocrsy and stinginess narowness crulety bigatry and everything.

Songbirds and doves and pigeons roost here at times and sing and coo. But hawks and crows come here too and the steeple is all foul up here.

There is a litening rod on top of this here steeple and a lot of others down below it sticking up like daggers.

Funny aint it puttin litening rods on a church? Thats faith for you. And at

that scientists dont know yet whether litening rods draws litening or draws it away. Yet fokes still put them up.

But at that the whole earth is covered with litening rods of one kind and another and nobody can prove that they ever done any good or kep off any harm. People cant find no sure way to fend off evil but they just got to be doing something.

But of all the fool litening rods humanity has ever put up the crime and punishment business costs the most and is the least use. What has punishment got to do with crime? Ide ought to know for they call me the worst criminal of the age a monster unpareled one paper put it.

Those human hienas down there running around this town howling for my poor body and not knowing that they have me treed are trying to show how much better they are than what I am. Theyre so much better than me they cant indure my existence on the same earth. But what theyre really doing shows theyre just like me. Theyre explaining me without knowing it.

So much fool dope has been printed about me Ide like to put one thing straight. The rest dont matter but this does—if only I dont lose this little pensil Ime writing with or if the storm that is gathering over yonder dont drown out the moonlight or douse me with rain.

Eglah understood me and for her sake Ime trying to understand the guys who are hunting for my blood. Its as hard I guess for them to understand me as it is for me to understand my own self.

The poor boobs dont know no more and havent learned no more about justice or mercy or anything in a thousand years than what the wasps have. But Ime trying to be different for Eglahs sake and Ime saying to myself that I forgive them poor boobs even if they get me. I simpathyze with them because they are driftwood just like I am. Everybody is always going over one Niagara Falls or another—Ive went over a dozen.

They call me the world champion fiend.



Only a cream that your skin can absorb will give it that clear fresh look in an instant

A cream to give your skin a special freshness

Something to make the skin look its best at a moment's notice. Every woman wants to know about it. Something that will actually make your skin feel and look softer and smoother the moment you apply it.

Only a cream that your skin can absorb will do this instantly. This cream is Pond's *Vanishing Cream*—made of ingredients famous for their soothing effect on the skin and by a formula that combines these ingredients in such a way that the cream is absorbed immediately.

Always before you go out or whenever you want to appear especially well, smooth on a little of this light cream. You will notice the moment you apply it to your cheeks what a freshened feeling it gives you. That tired look disappears and your skin looks clear—it will feel firm and rested. It is indispensable for evening use as it makes your skin look its best immediately.

How many times, especially when you were dancing, you have wished your face would not get shiny and

that the powder would stay on! Powder put directly on the skin does not stay, but soon flecks off, leaving your face as shiny as if you had not powdered.

How to make the powder stay on longer

Try powdering after you have used Pond's *Vanishing Cream*—the soft velvety surface it gives your skin forms the ideal powder base. The powder goes on evenly giving your skin a natural transparent tone and it stays on for hours. The cream cannot reappear in a shine because it contains not a drop of oil.

No one cream, however, can contain all the properties necessary to keep your skin in perfect condition. For thorough cleansing you need a cream with an oily base. Pond's *Cold Cream* has just the necessary amount of oil to remove every bit of dirt from the pores and not enough to overload them.

Use both these creams every day. Both are so fine in texture they cannot clog the pores or promote the growth of hair. You can get them in jars or tubes of convenient sizes at any drug or department store. The Pond's Extract Co., New York.

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PEARLS

Of course when my murders are compared with the deaths that have been caused by the noblest and purest patriots in times of war I make a bum small score. But these generals these religious fokes who have slew their thousands to my one have been working for glorious ideals so they say. As a fellow once said to me murder like criticisms should be constructive. I been only destructive.

I been like a pendulum in a clock. I've went as far to the good as ever I went to the bad. I've cried over sick children and I never hurt an animal and I always gave liberal to the poor. I sent money to my mother when it was my last cent and she never knew what I was up to and nobody ever guessed my real name yet and I'm not tellin it now so the poor old woman will never find out. She was the best mother a fello ever had but what did that get me—or her?

Nobody else ever tried to understand me but Eglah and she didn't even have to try. She just understood by heart. She was the best woman ever I seen.

And what I don't know about women aint to be knowed. Aint I had thirty wives?

I've knowed every kind of woman they is in every kind of mood a woman can have and Eglah was the only one that was white all through. And I give her the worst deal of all. Why? How do I know? Its just my way. I'm built so queer Eglah's goodness got me going worse than all the mean things my other wives done to me.

Eglah was my twenty-fourth or fifth I don't just remember which. Sounds funny I suppose. Everything gets funny when its piled on too thick.

But it was no joke to me lea me tell you. I get so tied up trying to keep track of all my wives keeping the ones I like quiet about my being away so much and keeping them in money and all that that finally I swore I'd quit marrying.

Well last year I was awful sick. I always get sick as a dog after killing anybody. I'm like one of those mountians or capes where they nearly always a terrible storm going on. I can't help it, the storms hurt me worse than anybody. I didn't pick out my idears they just come to me.

I killed a whole family once. I don't know why, they just got my goat and one night I laid em all out with an ax. And I got away easy. But I nearly went crazy with old R. E. Morse.

It sounds queer I guess to ask anybody to try to understand that a man must suffer a terrible pile before he would go after sleeping women and children with an ax. But I did feel terrible before and after. God it was awfull. But my get-away was easy.

And then Eglah come along and spoke to me so gentle and sweet I couldn't help going home with her like she asked me to.

She was as honest as the day was long or the night. She never flirted or played any of them old female games I've met up with so much. She seen I was down and out and she lifted me up.

There was a young professor name Brockle something who was after her and he had me so scared for a while I was all ready to put him out of the way but I overheard her tell him she couldn't love him and I like to died laughing.

Well we got married and I settled down

on the farm a while but it made me sick to see that she could go on loving her father and her brothers and sisters. It seemed she couldn't love me and them too. I felt kind of crowded in her heart.

I wanted to kill off the whole damn family. The only thing that held me back too was being afraid she would cry for them. But I had a fight to keep from it. I used to go out in the woods to beat off the temptation. It was like fighting a wildcat. It just tore me to strips.

Nights when I pertended to be asleep my heart was like a kettle boiling over with scawlding water. Once something just histed me out of bed and drove me down to the woodshed for the ax. Eglah heard me and followed me barefoot in her nightgown. I didn't hear her till I had my hand on the kitchen latch and she laid her hand on my arm.

Whats matter honey she says and I says Oh I was just restless and she says Maybe the air would do you good you poor thing and she went out on the back porch and set on the steps till I was over the fever.

But I couldn't trust myself. I told her I had to move on to a job I pertended I had in India and she packed up and come along. She nearly died at leaving the home fokes but she whipped her tears for my sake.

We took the train to a town where I had some things stored and some money in a bank also a wife. I picked up all my belongings except the extra wife and beat it out of there. I got afraid to go anywhere for fear some woman would come up and claim me.

So I said lets make the rest of the trip in a moter and Eglah said all right and I bought a little car and we started out. I took along a suitcase full of marriage licenses and photographs and old letters.

Don't ask me why. How do I know why I do anything? Well we got to the ocean at last and it kind of soothed me. It was so big and it made me feel so small like. I didn't amount to much or my troubles neither.

Eglah loved it because it was so grand and sometimes wed camp on a beach somewhere and go swimming. She was awful pritty in the sea white as the foam and as graceful as the waves.

And then byneby just because everything was so perfect I begun to get ugly. I wanted to get back to the rotten towns and the rotten women.

I begun treating Eglah like she was a dog but instead of hating me or snapping at me she seen I was sick and she was awfull sorry.

That made me wilder than ever. When she was nice to me I wanted to beat her to death. Just then I needed quarrels and foul language and a general knock down and drag out. And all I could get was pity and love.

Once or twice I started to drown her in the ocean. I held her under the water till she was almost gone. But I couldn't quite lose her then. She thought I was skylarking and tried to be a good sport scared as she was and strangling. She laughed kind of sickish but she laughed.

One night after supper by a campfire I dug into my suitcase and read some of my old love letters.

One of the first ones I dug out of the bunch was from my tenth or eleventh wife an old skate I married for her money.

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er money.



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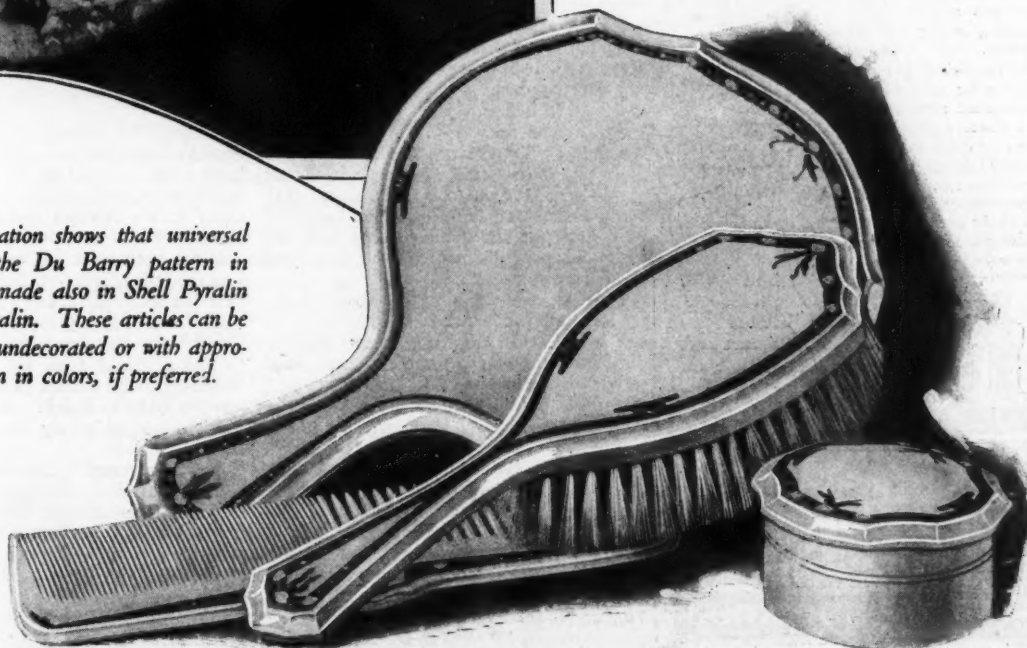
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as a gargle

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THE ANTISEPTIC LINIMENT

I got it all off her and left her flat, till I heard that she had inherited some more. Then I wrote and asked her would she forgive me and take me back.

She gave me hell for breakfast in a red-hot anser. Abuse was what I had a yen for. I laughed out loud reading it over. When Eglah asked me why I flang her the letter and I says thats the kind of a wife youd ought to be for thats the kind of a husband I am.

Then I tell her. If I hadder hit her with the head of an ax she coudent have been more stunned. She coudent understand that I could have another wife living. But byneby she begun to realize what it meant for her. All the life we had lived together come back to her and she understood all of a sudden that she had no standing in law or religion. I had tricked her into being a—well I dont like to use the word but anyways she was going to be an old maid with a bastard.

When Eglah finally got it through her head that I had another wife living I told her about still another wife, and then another about all of them. I seen about them in a book once.

It seems as horrible to me now as it ever could be to anybody but I am all kinds of a man. And so is everybody all kinds. There was a time when the best of men bilt machines to torcher men and women with and usednt the noblest leaders of the day put the wheel and the rack and maiden and red hot sandals and boiling oil to work on poor innocent fellow humans who coudent satisfy them or agree with them? Sure they did.

Why in our own America didnt the kindest and best people used to burn young women and old women alive, and who was that fello the churchfolks squeezed to death by piling logs on top of him one by one? Its all in the books.

The world has outgrew some of that old stuff but I aint. I belong to the good old times.

Eglah was really just as crazy as what I was. Only she was a maniac for mercy. She didnt have a drop of hate in her sweet white soul. Even when I convinced her what a hounddog she had married she coudent blame the hounddog for not being a god. Somehow her soul seen through my laugh and she knew it was the laugh of a man in hell.

She didnt ask for my life or want to lynch me. She didnt threaten to expose me. She didnt spit on me. She didnt say look what you made out of me that was a decent girl. She shook her beautiful head and put out her soft hand and she says you poor tormented soul how you must have suffered.

I just went out of my mind then. I got up and grabbed a hatchet I had used to cut wood with for our fires. And I butchered that lamb like Cain beat Abel to death screaming. It was me that screamed not her. For I was in the greatest pain. Why that girl she didnt blame me even then!

Well when the storm passed over then come the back wash. Remorse hit me like a stroke of lightning. Byneby I got scared. I carried her poor body in the little car deep into the desert and buried her and nobody seen me except the spying coyotes and I put her so deep that they wont never reach her.

I stayed in the desert by the grave a

long wile and then I had to get back to the crowds and gamble again with the crooked wheel of life. But my luck was done. I fell into the first trap like a boob and a cheap bull got the bracelets on me. I was gave away by the meanest wife I ever had. I married her because she said she had a lot of money and jewelry and she hadnt a cent and the jewelry was phony.

The moonlite is gone and the storm is coming closer and I cant see what I write. I feel like a fool for writing it anyway for whats the use of anything? Whos going to read it and believe it? Here I am hollering for pity when I never had none for nobody. Come on up and get me you poor fish down there. Youre just like me running your heads off for something thats close by you and you dont know it and when you get it you break it.

If only the litening thats stabbing round in those clouds would anser my prayer and hand me one good clean wallop—This poor snake who didnt ask for his poison or his fangs but had to keep them and coudent help using them.

I dont get no anser! I pray but I dont get no anser. The litening stabs everthing but me.

I keep calling to it but it wont come. The rain has drove the people off the streets to shelter. Nobody can see me or hear me up here begging God for just one little thunderbolt.

Maybe if I was to jump down onto the spearhead of that tall litening rod maybe a litening rod would be some use at last. Some folks say litening rods draw litening like punishments draw crime. Maybe if—well here goes.

VIII

ON THE morning after the storm, John Robey, the sexton, going to see if any damage had been done to the First Street Church, observed that a human body was impaled on one of the lightning rods. It was seared almost beyond recognition. In the belfry tower was a hymn book half filled with writing. The document was placed in the hands of the police, who gave it to the press. The case of the People vs. Smith, etc., was now quashed.

Among the countless readers of that apology for a life was Professor Brocklebank. He felt that his intuitions of crime had been proved correct. But the authenticity of his theories seemed to have no sway over his emotions.

What both he and Trainor had written was the true truth, but there were passions that the truth would not appease, passions that the truth only embittered the more. Truth was so many-faced that mercy to the criminal took on the aspect of treachery to the victim. To forgive Trainor was to betray Eglah. Loyalty to the ideal looked hideously like disloyalty to the real.

Thwarted and disheartened by this eternal paradox, Professor Brocklebank took from his suitcase the masterwork of his philosophy and tore the manuscript across and across. He dropped the tatters of wisdom into the wastebasket where experience casts the triumphs of meditation; where passion casts experience; where life casts wisdom.



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This Hero Business

(Continued from page 34)

On the back seat of the third car sat, side by side, Shawnee Run's pair of best known ex-fighting men, Captain Jere Rudolph sitting on the right, young Mort Overstreet on the left. Marching bodies, secret order lodges in full regalia, and citizens generally, made up the tail of the procession. It passed out Main Street and over the Iron Bridge in a thick yellow dust cloud of its own raising.

At the outset there had been doubt in the minds of some of those in authority as to whether Captain Rudolph would be willing to favor by his presence the services of the day. He had grown perceptibly feebler of late, and somehow seemed sort of distant and standoffish toward people generally—sort of shy. Yes, shy was really the better word of the three to describe it. But when the Reverend Ames, as spokesman for the committee on arrangements, called upon him at his cottage and urged his participation, to the end that the great event might properly be out-rounded and made complete, the octogenarian gave his consent promptly. So doing, he showed a faint trace of his one-time sprightliness.

"I've been sort of calculatin' that the next time I wore my Grand Army clothes out to that cemetery I'd be stayin' on there permanently after the rest of the folks had come on back to town," he said. "So I can't scarcely say but what I'm will'n' to take the jaunt with a reasonable guarantee of finishin' out the round trip. Maybe me and young Overstreet might enjoy visitin' with each other, too, during the ride—I figure we'd be likely to have somethin' congenial to talk about. I may not git down street more'n about once in a coon's age these days but even so I manage to keep track of things generally. . . . Yes, elder, you may tell the rest of the committee I'll be all dressed up and ready when the rig comes by for me on next Tuesday afternoon."

But when Tuesday afternoon came his spurt of vivacity appeared to have run its course. He, who once upon a time had been so prolific of speech, seemed now to be concerned with abstracting thoughts which kept him for the most part dumb as he sat in the car. Young Overstreet ordinarily was slow of speech, and this day embarrassment had tied his tongue in a double bowknot. There was a suggestion of a deeper emotion than embarrassment in his manner and in his face. It might almost have been suspected to betoken a touch of sullenness—of chronic discontent, say. However, few persons, if any, took cognizance of his attitude or Cap'n Jere's, either. The eyes of all beholders were naturally upon the front car where the great man rode with his guard of honor.

Through the first three-quarters of an hour the ceremonies at the cemetery hardly could have gone forward more auspiciously than they did go. Of course, when the band played "The Star Spangled Banner" the assemblage, trying to sing it, made rather a hash of the job. Still, they did as well as most of us could have done had we been there. But following the opening prayer, the bandsmen blared forth the air of "The Battle Hymn of the

Republic" and all hands came in splendidly with the words of "John Brown's Body." When they came to the chorus, Mort Overstreet, singing under his breath, rendered it according to a version which had found popularity with his overseas contingent. This way:

All we do is sign the payroll,
All we do is sign the payroll,
All we do is sign the payroll—
And we never draw a gol dam cent!

But only Cap'n Jere, alongside him, heard the parody or marked the ironic emphasis of the singer's tone.

Next, on being introduced with fragrant sentences of praise by Mr. Eddie Boatwright, the orator of the day went at it grandly. He led off appropriately with a quotation from a standard work of poetry. He invoked the shades of America's warrior hosts to hearken to the words he now would speak; the inference was that if they did so they would enjoy a rare treat. In uplifting sonorous measures he drew a symbolic image of the flag of our country with particular reference to what the flag meant personally to him. He made it plain—no, that's not right; he made it fancy—that he heartily endorsed the flag. He approved the estate of motherhood. Home ties had from him the strongest of commendations. He told how liberty had been born on this continent when the soil of the land had sprouted with the blades of bayonets like the blades of the corn and how that, out of the fiery furnaces of battle, our civilization had been smelted.

A captious critic and one uninspired by the prevalent mood of the moment might have detected in Congressman Gifford's manner a hint that he rather fancied himself to be probably the most conspicuous and finished product of this same civilization of which so glowingly he spoke. But his hearers, without exception, found his utterances to their liking and so indicated. Well, it was a good speech as Congressman Gifford full well knew. In all the eight times heretofore that he had delivered it, it never yet had failed him. Approaching his climax he lifted both arms above his handsome iron-gray head:

"And so, my friends," he cried out, his voice quavering as though it came forth through sobs choked back, "and so, my dear friends, today we gather in this sacred spot, hallowed to us by precious associations and made beautiful by the tender and loving hands of gentle womanhood. And as here we mingle with these gallant returned heroes of the Great World War whom I see before me and whom we ever shall delight to honor and to cherish and to whom we pledge our grateful devotion, our support and our jealous care now and hereafter—and as here we stand among the last resting places of our sacred dead of other and lesser wars, whose gallant memories and valorous deeds we always shall treasure in the caskets of our souls, I raise my reverent eyes to yonder dome of pure and flawless blue and—"

Matching the action to the cue of the words he did indeed lift his eyes and then and there, for the first time in his life, Congressman Gifford was guilty of starting

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Fleischmann's Yeast is a food, not a medicine. It does not act overnight—Nature does not work that way. But two or three cakes a day, eaten regularly over a period of time, will achieve positively incredible results.

Gradually the whole body is “toned” and built up. Regular daily elimination is assured. With richer, purer blood, lassitude vanishes—and you know once more the joy of glowing vibrant health.

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to paint a vocal masterpiece and the leaving it unfinished. He looked aloft and broke off his apostrophe in midflight. All of his audience looked where he looked and a nervous titter ran through their ranks. For overhead, the flawless blue dome just referred to magically had vanished. In that same moment the sunshine had been cut off. Out of the west, while they listened with senses enchained by his eloquence, a great black cloud, swollen and heavy with unspilt rain, had been swiftly rolling and spreading. It was now upon them, promising one of those torrential tropical downpours which seem so oddly out of place in temperate North America but which nevertheless persistently occur about once in so often in our summer times.

Even as Congressman Gifford fumbled for his next word the first gross drops fell, spitting like clots in their upturned faces and making fat stipples where they struck in the dust on spots from which the turf was worn away. Another instant, and a bolt of fork-tailed lightning ripped asunder the dropsical belly of the heavens and let the deluge down upon them in sheets and waves and flooding vertical cataracts. How that rain did rain! Subsequently the visitation was spoken of as a young cloudburst. It certainly deserved the name.

Decoration Day for Shawnee Run broke up right there. Rather, it was washed out by the roots. Nobody moved to adjourn but everybody moved to depart. Men, women and children, bandsmen, lodgemen, committeemen and all, they sped for shelter. The trouble was, though, that of fitting shelter there was none that side of town. Who would dare tarry under a roadside tree or take refuge beneath an iron bridge when that two-pronged lightning was flickering like an infernal tuning fork across the black keyboard of the firmament and evoking the deep bass music of the thunderclaps behind each quivering play of its blazing tines?

Those fleet of foot reached the parking spaces outside the burying ground fence, flung themselves into the cars, six, eight or ten to a load, and went homeward as fast as the skidding tires could turn. The rest followed afoot—children crying in their fright, women with the hair plastered against their faces and their holiday finery soaked and spoiled, men swearing as the sop ran down the backs of their necks and the mud came sloshing in over the tops of their shoes. Three minutes earlier that road to town had been a ribbon of crinkled dust, ankle-deep. Now it was a yellow batter, all creaming and sticky and slick. Through it they went, slipping and falling. It was a free-for-all foot race, and the prize was to get under a weather-tight roof and might the Devil take the hindmost.

There were two of the hindmost. One of them was Cap'n Jere and he never even started. The first plunge of the getaway caught him unawares. Blinded by the sudden drenching, battered against by more agile bodies, buffeted and bewildered and fumbling, the old man had a confused recollection of being upheld by someone and then, when that other slipped and went down, of seeking to aid him to his feet.

The next thing he knew with sureness was when he found himself down on the earth gasping and wheezing, at the back

of the speakers' stand which had been built up into the air, stair-steps fashion. He wasn't out of the rain here. Short of being inside four stout walls there was no escaping the rain. But in this lee he was somewhat protected from the wind which now had come and was blowing the rain before it in slanting streaks like silver lances all aimed the same way. He was holding fast to some dependable object. As his eyes cleared, he was surprised to discover that this object was a human arm inside of a wringing wet sleeve. Arm and sleeve, it next developed, were the property of his late riding companion, Mort Overstreet. So it must have been Mort who had steered him hither. He'd done it handily, too, seeing that Mort himself was gimpy.

His rescuer drew him down for better shelter beneath the overhang at the rear of the framework. They squatted there, getting wetter and wetter if such a thing were possible for a pair already wet to the point of saturation, but also getting their breath back, which was the main thing. The younger man was the first to speak:

"Well, Cap'n," he said with a sort of slow bitterness, "there don't seem to be but just the two of us left."

"Likely you're right," answered Cap'n Jere. "It would appear that, in a manner of sayin', everybody else has went off and left us behind. Well, speakin' for myself, I'd say that bein' deserted this-away has its advantages. We don't have to listen to anybody makin' an oration about us heroes, do we?"

Young Overstreet stared at him and took puzzled note of a twinkle in the eyes behind the blurred spectacles and of a broad grin that exposed the full strength, uppers and lowers, of the Captain's false teeth. Water coursed in streams down the puckered old face. His shoes must be full of water by now; his pockets, too, probably; Mort's were. Yet here he was with that cheerful grin on his face. There was no mirth in the lame boy's soul or in his voice, either, as he spoke again:

"Left us—you bet! Never gave neither one of us a thought, none of 'em. And that big windbag of a Gifford—he was the first to up and fly. I seen him. One minute swearin' that us World War veterans would always be looked out for by him and the next minute beatin' it through the crowd fur a front seat in somebody's car. What do you know about that?"

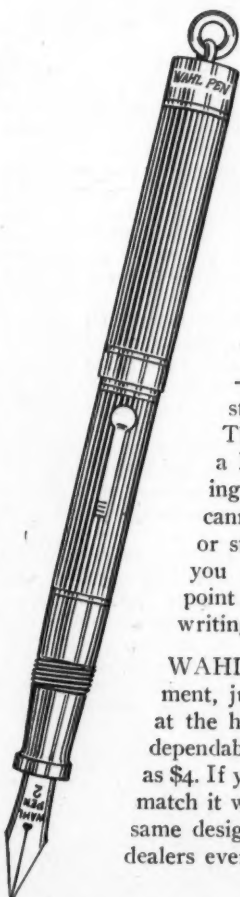
"Only what you tell me," said Cap'n Jere, still smiling as at a good joke. "I didn't see him go myself. Still, I wouldn't put it past him—knowin' the run of the breed. I was something of a public speaker myself before I reformed. And public speakers have a cravin' to be out in front."

Apparently the young cloudburst had restored to the old man a measure of his former sprightliness—a freshet from on high livening up a withered century plant.

"Son," he said briskly, "for quite a spell I've been waitin' my chances to get to have a little talk with you in private. I look on this here rain as sort of providential—it's give me the opportunity without nobody else round eavesdroppin' and everything comparatively quiet. I've been studyin' you—you may not have suspicioned it—but I've been studyin' you, such few times as I've run across you. Unbeknownst to you I was studyin' whilst

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we were comin' out here together today. I think I know w' t's been passin' through your mind off and on. I figure, in a way of speakin', that I've also been goin' through the same things you've went through." He halted to let a particularly loud thunderclap die away in rumblings. "Yes, sir, I wanted specially to talk with you about this here business of bein' a popular hero. It's like almost any other business—it has its ups and downs. I know, because I've been all the way through it and you've only just recently started in to followin' it. Yes sir, the hero business is certainly a funny kind of business. Snug up a little bit closer and let me tell you some of the ins and outs of it."

There is lack of space and time here for repeating all under this heading that Cap'n Jere had to say. While the storm beat down on him and the ruined bunting drained its paint-box colors upon him he spoke, without interruption from his hearer, for perhaps five minutes. We quote here only his concluding remarks, delivered with a due seriousness:

"I'd say, furthermore, that the difference between your war and mine was that mine lasted so long that the folks at home got used to seein' the results of it about 'em—the human wreckage and all—whilst yours was over and ended so quick that the let-down feelin' come slap-bang when the enthusiasm was still runnin' high and the whole thing was still more or less of a hurrah and a novelty. It left people feelin' like as if they'd spent a whole pile of money on a show and then hadn't got the worth of their money. They fussed over you a lot when you first got back, didn't they? Well, in our case it was different. We just struggled in with our discharge papers in our pockets and went to work again and whilst everybody here was glad to see us home again there was no excitement. They just took us as a matter of course. Why, Goddle Midey, son, except among ourselves, us veterans wasn't called by our military titles as a general thing. That came later."

"But in due time us fellers that's saved the Union got our proper rewards. Congress quit talkin' about what it was goin' to do for us and really done somethin'. We got political recognition and we got

public offices, some of us, and we got our pensions. Some that didn't deserve it got on the rolls—coffee-coolers and sutlers and camp followers and the likes of that—even some deserters. There had to be abuses in the system but the main p'int, I take it, was that sooner or later every deservin' veteran was looked after. And you mark my words, son, in due time you boys that fought this last war will get your just deserts, too. You'll hear people goin' round sayin' that republics are ungrateful. That's a lie! Republics ain't ungrateful and they ain't ungenerous, neither—leastwise, I'm here to testify to it that this here one's not. And some of these days you'll be sayin' the same thing about your country that I do. You may feel different about it right now but you won't feel so always."

"Of course a feller that goes into the hero business is liable to make his mistakes, same as in any other line. F'r instance, if he should chance to get crippled up in battle the best thing he can do for his own peace of mind is just to stay right where he fell and die there and be buried there. That'll give the folks at home a chance to carve his name on a nice monument and make fancy speeches about him and appreciate his memory and all. He's no trouble to anybody any more; he's a pleasure and a pride. But if he insists on gettin' well and draggin' himself back, maybe blind or with a timber leg or an empty coat sleeve flappin', he's a trouble and a care. And on top of that, if he goes round lookin' neglected and actin' reproachful people's consciences start hurtin' 'em and they take it out on him; they git to dislikin' him, I guess, because it makes 'em so uncomfortable every time they see him, to think that maybe they're shirkin' their own responsibilities in the premises. I ain't blamin' 'em so much for it, neither—it's only human nature. And nearly everybody suffers more or less from human nature."

"But there's one yet greater mistake you can make in this hero business—and that's the mistake of livin' too long. Don't live too long, son—take my advice and don't stay on and on till the hero business quits payin' its regular dividends." His tremulous hand stole out and patted his companion on his wet shoulder.

"Don't hang on till you lose step with the procession and your pet stories git to be tiresome and folks begin callin' you a pesky old nuisance behind your back. You maybe think it's hard on you now to be looked on as a burden and you still young and healthy. But wait till you git old and back-numbered and then you'll know—Goddle Midey, boy, you'll know what 'tis then!"

"And yet you just now said republics ain't ungrateful," quoth young Overstreet huskily. He wiped awkwardly at his cheek.

"I said it and I say it again," answered the old man. "They ain't ungrateful. But sometimes they are powerful forgetful! . . . Say, looky yonder! Those clouds are breakin' away there to the west'ard and the rain's beginnin' to slack off. What say we start hoofin' it towards town? We can't git any damper than what we already are, can we? And neither one of us ain't salt nor sugar, to melt away."

"Think you can make it?" asked Mort.

"Well, we've still got one sound leg between the two of us," said Cap'n Jere, "and we can kind of hold on to one another. Come on, Cumrud, let's try it anyway. Don't mind me callin' you 'Cumrud' do you?"

"Buddy" was what we used to call a good pal over in France," said Mort.

"Was it? Well, I reckon it's never too late for an old feller like me to try to be up to date. So, Buddy, if you can sort of git braced yourself and then help me up on these here old crooketty pins of mine I figure we might make a start."

Somewhat shaken by the effort, he finally stood upright. "Why, Goddle Midey," he said brightly, "what's a brisk little shower to a couple of old campaigners? This storm ain't a patchin' to one I remember we had down in Georgia right soon after the Surrender. Them slickery red clay hills—I can shut my eyes and see 'em right now!"

"And alongside the mud that we used to plow through over in France that there road yonder looks like a paved sidewalk," said young Mort. "Hang on to my arm. That's the ticket. All set, Buddy? Well, then, let's go!"

In November COSMOPOLITAN—see if you don't think
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Starring Mrs. Tim Hale

(Continued from page 92)

"Good God, this is what I've been loving and worshipping! I made an angel out of you and you ain't even a woman. Going to marry Tim Hale, were you? Not the man, but Tim Hale, the big star. The advertising. The following. I was your last chance. That was the idee. Well, now, you can take that nice new contract you got back to those fresh guys and tell 'em to start their camp fire with it. Seeing you won't be Mrs. Tim Hale it ain't much good to you or anybody else."

He put her down and she swayed against the wall. His hands shot out and took her round, obstinate baby chin.

"Look at me, Phyllis. Tell me the

truth, or by God, I'll break every bone in your worthless little carcass! Did you ever love me one little bit?"

Phyllis, the lovely, perfumed Phyllis, looked into his eyes. She would have liked to plead, to lie, to lure. But she was not meant for such rock-bottom action—Phyllis.

"No."

The man shut his eyes.

"Never loved me a bit. But you knew I was plumb crazy about you. Suppose you never even liked to have me kiss you."

The hand tightened on her chin.

"No."

Again he winced. Hurt, mortally hurt.

"Sold yourself for what you could get. Another cheap woman." He flung her and she fell, striking her head on the chair.

Then Phyllis, like a rat driven into a corner, turned on him.

"You," she screamed, dragging herself to her knees, "you, what d'you mean throwing me around and shaking me up like that? What'd you pick on a girl like me for if you wanted somebody to stay home and darn your socks? Couldn't you see I wasn't cut out for that domestic stuff? Gee, you always were raving about how you liked my style and my pep. You picked me for what I was and then because I wouldn't be a—housemaid too, you—men are all like that. Well, maybe

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I was going to do you. But I've been a sap. I thought you were a cinch. If I'd 'a' played a little more, you'd have married me all right and I could have done as I liked after."

Tim Hale watched her with the cold eyes of a man who sees a poisonous animal in its death struggle. On his face every day of his fifty years stood out.

"All right," he said quietly, "all right. I guess you're right. I've no call to jump on you. I'm a fool—an old fool. You've got that truck"—he indicated the solitaire, the earrings, the diamond wrist watch and gold bag—"to pay you for your time. I didn't mean to hurt you. But I'm a rough old guy. Now get out. Get out and stay out."

"Oh, you go to the devil!" said Phyllis.

Tim Hale was still shuddering as he got out of his limousine and walked up his front steps.

As he passed along the upper hall, he heard the gentle sound of a rocker in his aunt's room. He felt the need to speak with her. He wanted to be himself. He wanted to get the taste out of his mouth. He could make her so happy just by telling her it was all off with Phyllis.

He opened the door.

In a low rocking chair by the window sat Amy Landis. Her hair was still down, her hair that was more gray than brown. A plump, neat, middle-aged woman with a face devoid of powder on which lay the lines and cares of forty years.

Her hands were prettily busy. She was darning socks.

When she saw him she blushed painfully. They were his socks.

"Oh, I didn't know!" she said softly.

"Neither did I," said Tim Hale. "Amy, how old are you?"

"Forty," said Amy Landis.

"Do you reckon you'd be scared to have any kids now, Amy?"

Her eyes grew serious, candid. "No, I don't think so, Tim."

"Then, Amy, will you marry me?"

"Yes, if you really want me," said Amy Landis. "But Tim, there's a good many things I—I think different about. I couldn't stand for—for those blue satin walls in the drawing room."

"You can hang 'em in sheepskin or calico, Amy, if you want to," said Tim Hale.

He had always been a sucker for women.

Which is all right if you pick the right kind of women.

IV

ON THE big couch in her bungalow court sitting room, Phyllis lay weeping out the rage and disappointment of her shallow, intense young heart.

The colored maid who bent over her, bathing her face, where an ugly bruise showed on one temple, regarded her with malicious and unsympathetic interest.

"Oh," wailed Phyllis wildly as she sat up, clenching her little hands, "darn it all, Emma, darn it all! The worst of it is, if he'd been like that all the time instead of such a darn old softie, I could have loved him just as well as not."

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The Desert Healer

(Continued from page 25)

suddenly approached with a soft murmur of apology.

The shrill squeal of a stallion and the trampling of hoofs made Meredith realize the reason for the interruption.

"Time up?" he said regretfully, following Carew into the tent. "By Jove, it's late!" he added, glancing at his watch. "Can we get into Blidah by eleven?"

"Not by the way the Chalmerses brought you," replied Carew with a faint smile.

The same escort that had ridden with him earlier in the day was waiting but he dismissed them and alone the two men rode out into the moonlit night. For a time they did not speak. Carew had apparently reached the limit of his confidences and Meredith was in no mood to break the silence. It had been a curious meeting, a curious renewal of an old friendship, but the soldier was left with an uncomfortable feeling of doubt whether it would not have been better if no reminder of his early life had been brought to disturb the peace that, seemingly, his old friend had found in the desert. For how much did the past still count with him? Did he never regret the fine old property in England where generations of Carews had lived since the days of the Virgin Queen whose visit had given the house its name?

"Will you never go back, Gervas?" he asked involuntarily.

"Go back—where?"

"To Royal Carew."

Carew shook his head. "I told you I had done with the old life," he said rather wearily. "Royal Carew belongs to the past—and the past is dead. And I couldn't very well go back now if I wanted to. I let my cousin have the place. He is my heir; it would have come to him eventually."

As they reached the summit of a rather larger hill than they had yet encountered Carew slackened speed with a word of warning.

"There is a deserted village in the valley," he said, pointing down into the darkness. "Be careful how you go—it's a confusing place at night. And if anything happens—sit tight and leave the talking to me," he added significantly. And as he spurred the bay a half length in advance Meredith saw his hand go to the silk shawl that was swathed about his waist. A deserted village—but Carew was reaching for his revolver. With a grin Meredith took a firmer grip of Captain André's gray. He had passed through similar deserted villages in India.

"Heave ahead," he said cheerily.

The valley was shallower than others they had traversed and here and there a shaft of moonlight cut through the murky gloom. They were on the village before Meredith realized its nearness, and as they threaded the empty streets at a slow canter he looked keenly about him with a slight feeling of pleasurable excitement. But no sound broke the stillness and no furtive figures lurked among the ruined huts. When they were speeding across the plain once more he turned to Carew.

"What might have happened?" he asked curiously.

"Anything—murder, probably, if you had been alone."

Meredith chuckled at the casual tone.

"Healthy spot for a midnight ride!"

"It saves three miles," replied Carew.

And Meredith flung back his head and laughed like a boy.

CHAPTER II

FOR a few moments after the train that was carrying Major Meredith back to Algiers had pulled jerkily out of the station Carew lingered on the deserted, ill lighted platform. Then he strode leisurely to where the horses were waiting in the care of a Kabyle lad, signed to the boy to follow him with Captain André's horse and trotted Suliman slowly towards the town. Entering by the Es-Sebt Gate he turned in the direction of the cavalry barracks.

Despite the late hour the trams were still clanging noisily through the streets. The pavements were thronged—a ceaseless stream of cosmopolitan humanity, all jostling indiscriminately. Tonight Blidah seemed to be *en fête*, noisier and more blatant than usual. And to Carew, fresh from nearly a year in the desert, the scene was distasteful.

At the cavalry barracks he handed over Captain André's gray to the sleepy groom who was waiting and, dismissing the Kabyle lad, turned with a sigh of relief in the direction of the Bab-el-Rabah. Passing through the gateway he headed towards the east, intending to return by the same route by which he had brought Major Meredith. Once clear of the town Suliman broke of his own accord into the long, swinging gallop to which he was accustomed, and for a time Carew let him take his own pace. But soon he checked him, drawing him into a reluctant walk. And pacing slowly forward through the quiet night he set himself at last to face the torturing recollections of the past that for years he had put resolutely out of his mind.

Inscrutable as the Arabs amongst whom he lived, he exhibited no outward sign of agitation, but memories like stabs of actual pain crowded in upon him.

Royal Carew—and the woman he had loved! With the sweat of agony thick on his forehead he lived again through the horror of that ghastly home-coming. He saw again, clearly as though they stood before him, the pitying, terrified faces of the old servants from whom he learned the sordid story of his betrayal. He passed once more through the hours of anguish when he had knelt in dumb, helpless misery beside the tiny cot in the luxurious nursery and watched the death struggle of the child who, worse than motherless, he loved so passionately. The dark waters of despair had closed over his head that night. Weak from the terrible wound that had brought him back to England, crushed by the double tragedy, he had longed and prayed for death. And when he had at last found courage to go forward with what remained to him of life it was as a changed man, embittered out of any semblance to his former self.

He had divorced his wife that she might marry the man for whom she had left him; and with grim justice, because she had been the mother of his son, he had settled

upon her an adequate fortune. But for the woman herself he had no feeling left but loathing and contempt. She had deceived him, lied to him. She had killed his love—and with it had died esteem for and belief in the sex she represented.

But the memory of his little son who had died was a living force within him. It had gone with him through all the years of loneliness and disillusion, a grief as bitter now as on that first night of his bereavement. Not for the woman but for the child his starved heart still yearned with passionate intensity. It was to try to deaden the pain of memory, to ease the burden of his solitude, that he had kept the little waif of the desert. And the blind boy in his helplessness and dependence had in some measure filled the blank in his life. But tonight the remembrance of his loss was heavy upon him.

And Royal Carew! For the first time in years he let his thoughts turn to the beautiful property he had voluntarily surrendered and a wave of intense homesickness passed over him. He crushed it down with a feeling of contempt for his own weakness.

After all, it had been no fault of Meredith's. Carew had guessed the reason of the soldier's restrained manner at the moment of meeting and the knowledge had added warmth to his own greeting. Pride had stirred him—that, and a vague idea of testing his own command over himself. And now was he glad or sorry for Meredith's coming?

With a powerful effort of will he put away all thoughts of Meredith and the memories he had awakened and, touching Suliman with his heel, concentrated on the results of the difficult mission from which he was now returning to Algiers.

It had been a delicate business, attended with considerable danger that had not disturbed him, and subtle oriental intrigue, in dealing with which Hosein's help had been invaluable. The man had been Carew's body-servant and faithful companion for all the years he had lived in Algeria. The son of his father's old dragoon, Carew remembered him as a singularly intelligent urchin, a year or two older than himself, employed about the villa on Mustapha Supérieur where the winters of his own boyhood had been spent, and he had sought him out on his first return to the country.

He had never regretted it. Devoted and single minded in his service, the Arab had been friend as well as servant and a loyal cooperator in Carew's chosen work. A wanderer by instinct, it was not only in Algeria that Hosein had traveled, and the green band of the Mecca pilgrim that he wore gave him a prestige which had carried his master and himself through some sufficiently awkward situations. Carew had owed his life to him not once nor twice, and he knew that but for Hosein's watchfulness he would never have returned alive from this last dangerous undertaking. The report he was carrying back to the Governor in Algiers was due as much to Hosein as to himself. And the Arab should not be the loser if he could help it, he thought with a sudden rare smile.

Immersed in his thoughts, he had taken

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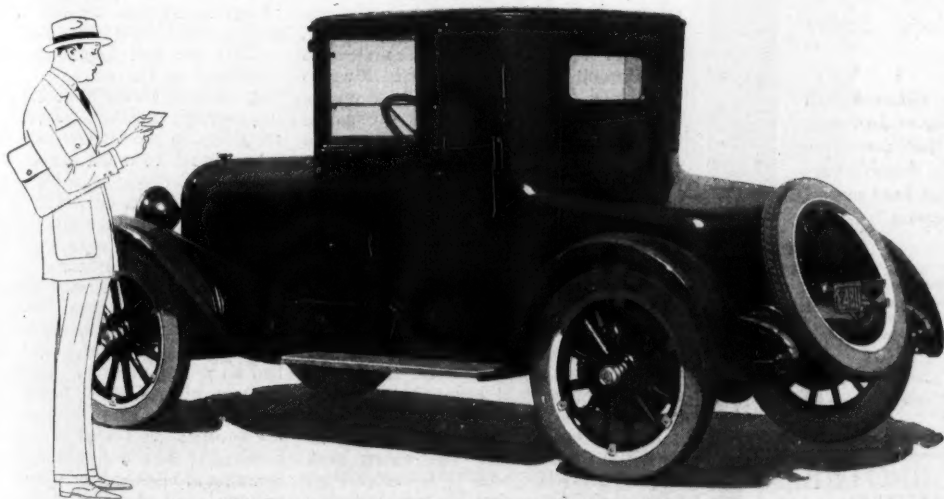
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little notice of his surroundings and had not realized how far he had come on his homeward journey. A whistling snort from Suliman and a sudden wild swerve that would have unseated a less practiced horseman brought him back abruptly to the immediate present, and looking round sharply he saw that they had arrived at the outskirts of the deserted village. Dragging his horse to a standstill he looked keenly about him, but in spite of the brilliant moonlight he could see nothing moving. Yet Suliman was accustomed to night work and it was unlike him to shy at shadows.

He was nearing the last group of tumbled-down huts when a sudden sound breaking weirdly on the silence of the night sent Suliman high on his heels in furious protest.

Hauling him down, Carew twisted in the saddle, listening intently. It came again, echoing from a little lane that straggled from the main street—the wail of a woman's voice crying wildly in French for help. A woman—in such a place and at such an hour! Carew's compressed lips parted in a mirthless grin. What was a woman doing at midnight in that village of ill repute? Some little fool doubtless, who had tempted Providence too highly, paying the price of her folly! Well, let her pay! In all probability she had brought it on herself—she could abide by the consequences. It was no business of his anyhow. Why should he, of all men, interfere to help a woman in her need?

But as Suliman started forward the cry was repeated with words that made Carew check him with an iron hand and bring him, quivering, to his haunches. Clear and distinct they came to him—words of frenzied entreaty to a higher power than his, words in a language he least expected to hear.

"Help, help! O God, send help!"

An Englishwoman! For a moment he battled with himself. Then with a terrible oath he wrenched his horse's head round savagely and drove him down the little lane at a headlong gallop.

The lane was a *cul de sac*, the house he sought at the far end of it, for there only did a dim light filtering through an unshuttered window show any sign of habitation. Deep shadows masked the entrance, and a few feet short of it, in a patch of vivid moonlight, he pulled up and leaping to the ground raced towards the hidden doorway. His foot was on the crumbling step when out of the gloom three figures rose up to bar his entrance and hurled themselves upon him.

The attack was silent, and in silence he met it. There was no time to reach for the revolver he had neglected to draw. Straining, heaving, he wrestled in the darkness with opponents whose faces he could not see, whose arms encircled him and whose clutching, sinewy hands tore murderously at his throat. A knife pricked him and with a blind instinct he caught at and held the hand that brandished it, crushing it in his strong fingers till he felt the yielding bones crack.

At last with a tremendous effort he wrenched himself free and reeled back gasping into the patch of moonlight, his heart pounding against his ribs, perspiration pouring from him. And as the bright light struck across his face the men who had followed him swiftly drew back

with sudden indetermination, muttering amongst themselves. He caught the words "El Hakim," the title he bore amongst the desert people, and almost before he realized it they had vanished.

For a moment he fought for breath, wiping the blinding moisture from his dripping face, fumbling for the revolver in his waistcloth. Then another strangled cry from within the lighted hut spurred him into action and he sprang forward, flinging back the heavy burnous from his shoulders as he ran. The rotting door crashed open under the sudden impact of his weight and in the entrance he halted with leveled revolver.

For a second only. His eyes sweeping the tiny room met those of a gigantic evil-faced Arab who, startled at his appearance, had flung to the ground the woman who struggled in his arms and turned to meet the intruder with a scowl of murderous ferocity. A grim smile of recognition flickered across Carew's face. "Thou? Dog!" he thundered, and leaped at him.

For a moment the Arab wavered; then a knife flashed in his hand. But with a quick feint Carew dodged the sweeping blow and caught the upraised wrist. With his revolver pressing into the man's stomach he forced him back slowly against the wall of the hut, his fingers tightening their hold until the paralyzed hand unclenched and the knife clattered to the floor. Kicking it beyond reach, Carew backed a few paces and still keeping the Arab covered turned his attention for the first time to the woman.

Only a girl apparently, her face almost childish in its strained white piteousness, she had dragged herself up from the floor and was standing rocking on her feet in the middle of the room. He looked with a kind of cruel deliberation on the slender shaking limbs which, clothed in boyish riding dress that intimately revealed their delicate beauty, would have been the joy of an artist, but which filled him only with an acute feeling of antagonism. The folly of it, the shameless, senseless folly of it! A woman must be a fool and worse than a fool to expose herself thus in a land of veiled femininity. His antagonism augmented and he viewed unmoved the signs of terrible struggle through which she had passed.

That she had fought desperately was evidenced in the marks of violent handling she bore, in the unbound hair that lay in curling chestnut waves about her shoulders, in the tattered silk shirt, ripped from throat to waist. She seemed unaware of Carew's nearness. Panting for breath, her hands clenching and unclenching mechanically, she stood like a driven animal at bay, her eyes fixed on the Arab in a wild unblinking stare.

Carew broke the silence abruptly with a blunt question addressed to her that was brutally direct. He spoke in French that both could understand and because he had no wish tonight to pass as other than an Arab himself. The harsh voice roused her to a realization of his presence. For a few seconds she stared at him uncomprehendingly; then her cheeks flamed as the meaning of his words penetrated. Her lips quivered and she shrank back, dragging the tangle of soft hair over her uncovered bosom with an instinctive gesture of modesty. She tried to speak but for some

Where Barnum Went Wrong

FOR twenty years or so we've all been hearing Barnum's classic remark—"The public likes to be fooled."

The public has always enjoyed this biting comment, because it came from America's best loved showman.

But probably many of us had our fingers crossed even as we nodded approval.

* * *

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The makers of Royal Cord Tires said "Go to a legitimate dealer"—and stuck to it.

* * *

Perhaps Barnum intended his remark about the public to be taken with a grain of salt. Note that he always gave his customers a whale of a money's worth.



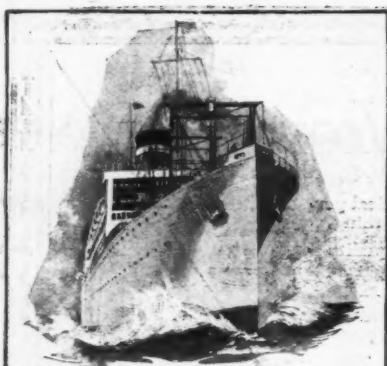
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time no words would come; then a wail of entreaty burst from her.

"Take me away, oh, for God's sake take me away!" she cried, and buried her face in her hands with a convulsive shudder.

He jerked his head impatiently. The life he had led for the last twelve years had made him intolerant of convention; he had no intention of allowing it to interfere now with the rough and ready justice he was fully prepared to administer. He had no reason to hesitate. The Arab was a well known criminal, the abduction of an English visitor an offense the Algerian government could not condone.

"I will take you away when you have answered my question, madame," he said coldly. "This is no time or place for false modesty. Does he go free or—" He raised his revolver with a gesture that was unmistakable.

But a sharp cry of protest arrested him. "No—no—not that," she gasped. "Let him go. You came—in time." The last words trailed into an almost inaudible whisper and with a little moan she slipped to the floor as if the last remnant of her strength had left her.

Indifferent to her distress, he turned from her to the Arab.

"What shame is this, O Abdul?" he said sternly, relapsing into Arabic.

Shuffling his feet the man glanced past him towards the open doorway from which Carew's tall figure effectually barred him. He knew that in the few minutes that had passed he had been nearer to death than was comfortable to contemplate. He had no desire to enter into a detailed history of his offense; his sole wish at the moment was to remove himself as speedily as might be from the proximity of the accusing eyes fixed on him.

"Shame indeed, O Sidi," he whined with a cringing salaam, "had I known that the *lalla* was under thy protection. But is not my lord known throughout all Algeria as one who deigns not to stoop his eyes to the face of a woman?"

There was cunning mixed with curiosity in the swift upward glance that met Carew's frowning stare for an instant and then wavered to earth again. The scowl on the Englishman's face deepened.

"Yet would I have killed thee for what thou hast done tonight," he said quickly. "Be very sure of that, O Abdul. But the *lalla* has given thee thy life. Give thanks—and go."

He cut short the Arab's glib protestations and hustled him toward the door. But on the threshold the man paused with another obsequious salaam.

"I have served my lord in the past," he muttered sullenly. "For the sake of that service will not my lord forget—tonight?"

Carew looked at him through narrowing eyelids.

"To suit thine own ends hast thou served me," he said pointedly, "and forgetfulness comes not readily to those who live with a sharp reminder—as I shall live," he added, stooping swiftly and catching up the knife that lay near his foot.

With a cold smile he thrust it into his waistcloth and turned slowly back into the room. He did not trouble to wait and watch the man off the premises. He had known Abdul el Dhib for years and his knowledge made him confident that in the meantime he was safe from any form of

revenge from the human jackal on whose head the Algerian government had set a price.

Remained the more perplexing problem of the woman thrust, wholly undesired, on his hands. He went to her reluctantly.

She shivered at his touch, staggering to her feet with a swift glance of apprehension round the room. She showed no fear of the tall Arab-clad figure standing beside her; by some instinct she seemed to sense that his presence constituted a protection and not a menace. She appeared to be only half conscious and incapable of any initiative. Carew, passionately anxious to be quit of the whole business, was not inclined to beat about the bush but came to the point with characteristic directness.

"You come from Blidah, madame?" She looked at him blankly, her puzzled eyes still shadowy with pain.

"Blidah—" she echoed vaguely. "Blidah? No—Algiers."

A look of dismay crossed Carew's face. Algiers was thirty miles away. He could have taken her back to Blidah easily enough, but Algiers with Suliman, who had already done a hard day's work, carrying double—it was out of the question.

"Where in Algiers?" he asked shortly. But the girl was past all explanations.

"Algiers—" she repeated weakly, and reeling, would have fallen but for the strong arm slipped round her.

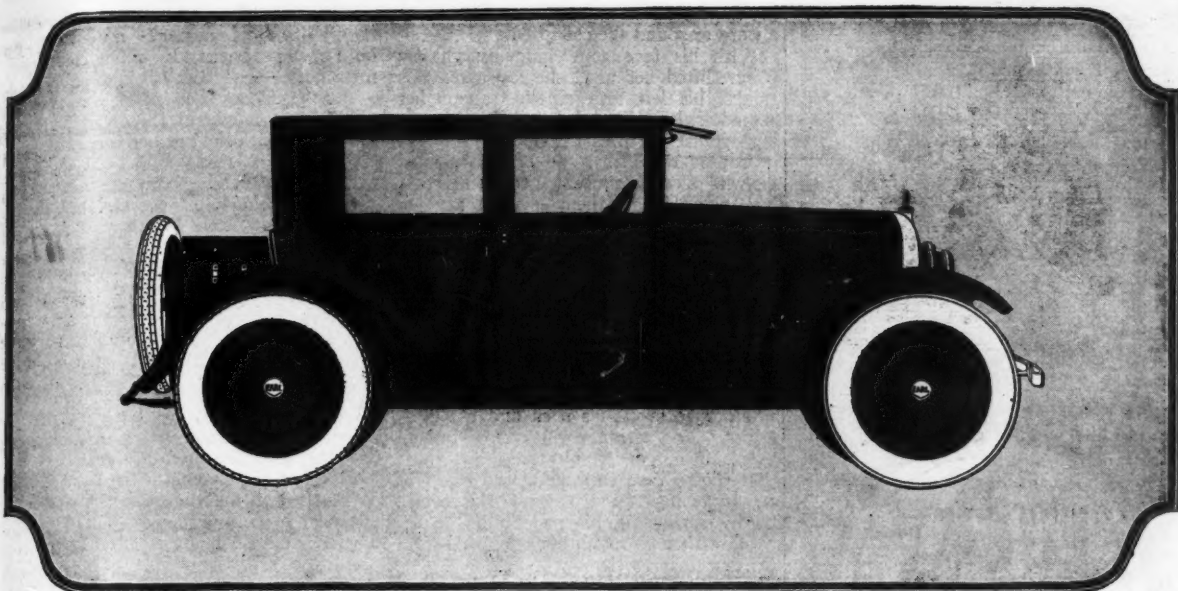
That settled it. Half fainting and wholly unable to express herself, she could give him no assistance and he realized there was nothing for it but the expedient he least desired—that of taking her to his own camp. His own camp—good God! With a grunt of disgust he half led, half carried her out of the hut.

Suliman, trained to stand, was waiting in the patch of moonlight, jerking the dangling bridle impatiently. Unhooking his heavy burnous Carew rolled it into a long soft pad and flung it across the horse's neck in front of the high peaked saddle. Then he swung the girl up with a curt "Hold on to his mane," and leaped up behind her.

Carew rode with a tight rein and a watchful eye on the drooping little figure in front of him. His own tall muscular form was drawn up in the saddle taut and rigid with repugnance at her nearness, every fiber in his being revolting from the proximity of her woman's body.

The need of one fragile girl had caused him to break a resolution from which he had sworn never to turn. Because she was English—it was the sole reason for the action that had so surprised himself.

But the call of the blood that had triumphed so unexpectedly over him did not in any way mitigate the constraint of his present situation. It was an embarrassment that grew momentarily more acute and distasteful. He was impatient of every little circumstance that augmented his discomfort. His nerves on edge, he found cause for annoyance even in the slow pace at which he was compelled to ride. It irked him as badly as it was irking Suliman who, with his nose turned towards home, was snatching at his bit and endeavoring to break into the usual gallop. The girl herself settled the last problem. She had been drooping more and more over the horse's neck, clutching instinctively at the thick mane in which



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her fingers were twined, but now without a word or sound she collapsed.

With his face gone suddenly ghastly Carew lifted her until she lay across his thighs, his left arm crooked about her shoulders, her disheveled little head pressing against his breast. God in Heaven, it wanted only this! So had he carried his wife once after a minor accident in the hunting field, and then, as now, a thick strand of scented hair had blown across his face, blinding him with its soft fragrance. He tore it away with shaking fingers.

Impossible now to stem the flood of recollection. It was stronger than his will to put it from him. Powerless to resist, he made no further effort, surrendering his mind to its bitter memories while he urged Suliman recklessly, careless whether he broke his neck and the girl's or not. And with a madness almost equal to his own, goaded by the sharp spurs that Carew used so seldom, the bay tore on at racing speed toward the camp, hardly slackening his pace until he arrived with a great slithering rush before the tent door.

Gathering the girl closer in his arms Carew slipped to the ground. To Hosein, imperturbable even in the face of this unprecedented spectacle, he vouchsafed only the curt explanation "Abdul el Dhib" and ordering coffee to be brought to him carried his slight burden into the tent and laid her among the silk cushions on the divan.

Striving to sink the man in the doctor he endeavored to regard her only as a case and set to work to combat the prolonged fainting fit that seemed to argue something more than a mere collapse from fear and fatigue. And as his somber eyes dwelt on her he found himself reluctantly admitting the uncommon beauty of her face and form. But her beauty made him no more kindly disposed towards her. A woman's beauty—the transient snare that lured trusting fools to their undoing!

At last she stirred, the long dark lashes that lay like a dusky fringe on her pale cheek fluttering tremulously. And as he bent over her, two deep blue eyes looked suddenly into his.

The color crept back slowly into her face and with a whispered inquiry she struggled to sit up. But he pressed her back, slipping another cushion under her head. "Lie still for a little while," he said slowly. "You fainted. I had to bring you to my camp. You are quite safe."

The curious trust she had shown earlier was manifested again, for she obeyed him without protest, her rigid limbs relaxing against the soft cushions.

"I've never fainted before in my life," she murmured. "I'm sorry to have been so stupid—to have given so much trouble." Then all at once her lips quivered and with a sharp, dry sob she flung her arm across her face. But the natural outburst of womanly weeping that Carew expected did not follow; only, watching her, he saw from time to time spasms of terrible shuddering shake her from head to foot.

The coffee that Hosein brought a few minutes later steadied her, and when Carew turned to her again after giving his servant further orders she staggered unsteadily to her feet with a half shy, half nervous glance about the tent.

"You have been very kind—I don't know how to thank you," she said hurriedly,

"but I can't trespass on your hospitality any longer. I—my husband—oh, I must get back! If—if you could lend me a horse—"

But even as she spoke she swayed giddily and caught at the divan for support. Carew looked at her narrowly.

"Algiers is thirty miles away," he explained gravely. "You are not fit to ride now. You must eat and rest for a few hours at least before you attempt to return."

But she shook her head vehemently. "I couldn't eat," she panted, a desperate urgency in her voice. "I couldn't rest. I mustn't rest. I've got to get back home. Oh, you don't understand—but I must get back to Algiers!"

She was shaking with nervousness but Carew felt instinctively that it was not of him she was afraid. And consequently who or what inspired her fear was no business of his, though as he watched her restlessly twisting the golden circlet that gleamed so incongruously on her slim, boyish hand he made a shrewd guess at the cause of her agitation.

"Be reasonable, madame," he said sharply. "I do not keep you to amuse myself but because you are not in a fit state at the moment to ride thirty miles. Eat what my servant is bringing, rest for a couple of hours, and then I will take you back to Algiers. If your—your friends are anxious about you they must be anxious for a few hours longer."

He spoke almost brutally and though she flinched from his tone she seemed to realize the necessity of submitting to his decision. But her distress was still obvious and he could see that she was fighting hard to maintain the restraint she imposed upon herself. And grudgingly he conceded admiration. Usually courage of any kind appealed to him but, morbidly prejudiced, he was irritated now by the unexpected moral courage she displayed.

The entrance of Hosein with the food he had ordered put a period to an awkward silence. And when the man withdrew Carew followed him out under the awning, leaving the girl alone, for it seemed to him that his presence must be as distasteful to her as her own was to him. He detained the Arab for a few moments to explain further requirements and then subsided into the deck chair.

He could still feel the soft weight of the girl's limp body in his arms; he brushed his hand across his face as though the thick strand of hair were again smothering him with its soft fragrance. Angry with himself, angry with her, he tried to forget her—and found himself suddenly wondering who she was. Good Lord, as if it mattered! Cursing under his breath, he pitched his cigarette away and went back into the tent.

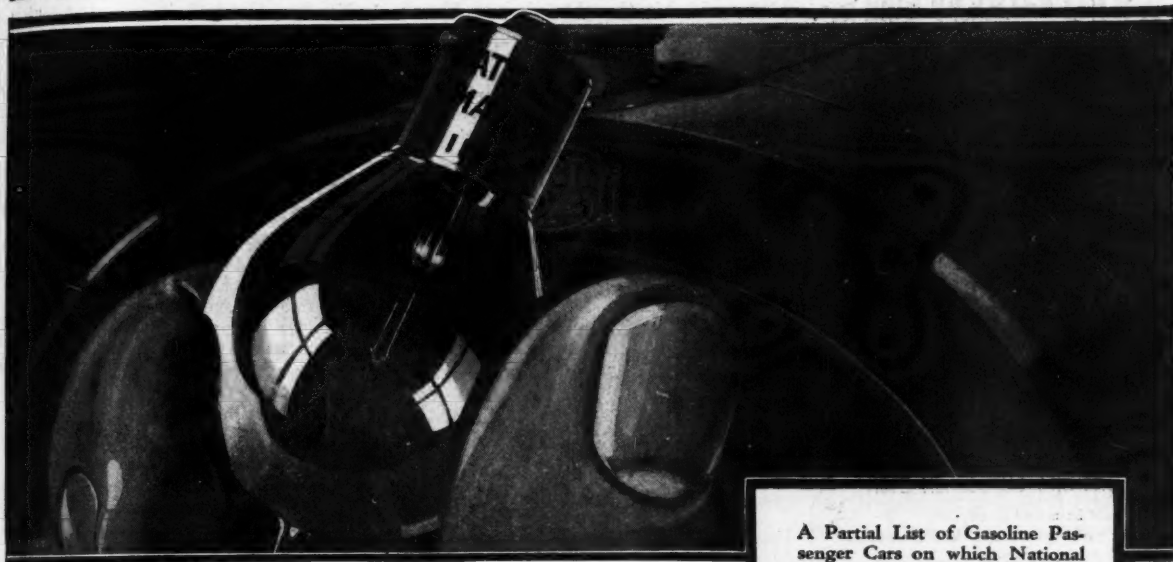
The girl met his glance with a shy smile. "I was hungry after all," she said, pointing to the empty tray, "and I'm so sleepy I can hardly keep my eyes open."

But determined to go no further than bare courtesy demanded, he vouchsafed only a brief nod to her tentative advance and led the way to the inner room. She turned to him with an imploring glance.

"You won't let me sleep too long?"

For a moment Carew's gloomy eyes looked deeply into the troubled depths of the blue ones fixed so earnestly on his,

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then: "The horses will be ready in two hours," he said curtly, and dropped the portiere into place.

For some time he paced the big tent restlessly, a prey to violent agitation. Why did his thoughts, despite himself, keep turning to the woman in the adjoining room? Swinging on his heel he crossed the room and taking a medical book from a small case by the door flung himself on the divan to read.

He was still reading when Hosein came back two hours later.

Laying the book aside with no particular haste he took a white burnous his servant tendered him and went slowly towards the inner room, scowling with annoyance and disinclination. Yet somebody had to wake the girl and he could hardly relegate the job to Hosein. He swept the curtains aside with an impatient jerk. She was still asleep, lying in an attitude of unconscious grace, her face hidden in the mass of tangled curls spread over the pillow. His stern lips set more rigidly as he touched her shoulder. She woke with a start and leaped to her feet with a sharp cry that changed quickly to a nervous little laugh of embarrassment.

"I was dreaming—I—is it time?" she stammered, stifling a yawn and blinking like a sleepy child.

Sparing of speech, he held out the white cloak. "The night is cool," he said briefly, and turned away too quickly to notice her vivid blush.

At the door of the tent, under the awning, he found Hosein.

And in an incredibly short space of time the girl joined them. The enveloping burnous was clasped securely, hiding her tattered clothing, and she seemed to have regained her self-possession, for she was quite at ease and looked about with eager curiosity at the scattered camp, and then with even greater interest at the waiting horses. The stallion Carew was to ride was almost unapproachable, wild-eyed and savage, held with difficulty by the two men who clung to his head. But the mount he had chosen for his unwelcome guest was a steadier, friendly beast that nuzzled her inquisitively as she went to him. She caught at his velvety nose with a little cry of delight, "Oh, what a darling!" and rubbed her cheek against his muzzle.

Then before Carew could aid her she was in the saddle, backing to make room for the screaming fury that was demonstrating his own reluctance to be mounted by every device known to his equine intelligence. But his rage was futile and Carew was up in a flash. And for five minutes Marny Geradine, who had ridden from babyhood, watched with breathless interest the sharpest tussle she had ever seen between a horse and its rider, and marveled at the infinite patience of the man who sat the plunging, frenzied brute like a Centaur. His methods were not the cruel ones which for five miserable years she had been compelled to witness, she thought with sudden bitterness. And yet this man was an Arab in whom cruelty might be excused.

Then as Carew wheeled alongside her she put away the painful thoughts that had risen in her mind and gave herself up to the delights of this strange ride with this equally strange companion.

It was all like a dream, fantastic and unreal, but a dream that gave her more

happiness than she had known for years. The swift gallop through the night, the cool wind blowing against her face, the easy movements of the horse between her knees were all sheer joy to her.

For her Algeria had been Algiers; she had not been asked to accompany her husband on his occasional shooting expeditions, and she had wearied of the town and its immediate surroundings. She had longed to go farther afield, to get right out into the desert, but she had been given no opportunity and she had long since learned to suppress inclinations that were ridiculed and never gratified. She craved for open spaces and the lonely places of the earth, and she had been chained to towns or crowded country houses and forced into a company which nauseated her; she had dreamed of nights like this, of the silence and peace of the wilderness, of solitary camps where she would sleep in happy dreamlessness under the radiant stars—and the nights that were her portion had been her chiefest torment.

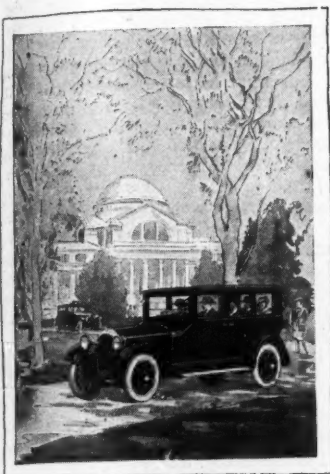
But this one night she could revel in her dream come true and rejoice in the freedom that might never again be hers. That she might have to pay, and perhaps pay hideously, for what had occurred did not matter; almost she did not care.

But even as she argued bravely with herself she blanched at the possible consequences of the terrible adventure that had been no fault of her own. If when she reached the villa at Mustapha, Clyde had already returned! She clenched her teeth on her quivering lip. He had gone for a fortnight's shooting and the fortnight would be up tomorrow—today, she remembered with a sudden glance of apprehension at the sky where the pinky flush of dawn was already showing. He might be back now! And if he were—what would her punishment be, what more would she have to endure from one who knew his strength and used it brutally, who was cruel and merciless by nature as if he too were an Arab!

Her mind leaped to the man who had abducted her. When, at the close of an appalling day, she had been brought to the hut in the deserted village, when she had finally realized the sinister purpose intended against her, the ghastly fear that had come to her, the paralyzing sense of helplessness she had felt as she struggled against the crushing arms that held her, the horror of the relentless face thrust close to hers was no new thing. So did Clyde look at her, so did she shrink and sicken when he touched her. Were all men alike—sensual brutes with no consideration or pity? One at least had shown himself to be different—and he was an Arab!

She turned and looked at him curiously. By the light of the brilliant moon she studied the lean, tanned face, wondering at its grave austerity. And as her gaze lingered on the white seam of an old scar that ran diagonally across his cheek above the curve of his square-cut jaw, she remembered suddenly that the stern, somber eyes that had looked into hers were blue. Were there blue-eyed Arabs as there were blue-eyed Afghans? Who was he? A personage of importance obviously; the rich appointments of the camp to which he had taken her proved it. The embroidered cloth burnous, the wide silk

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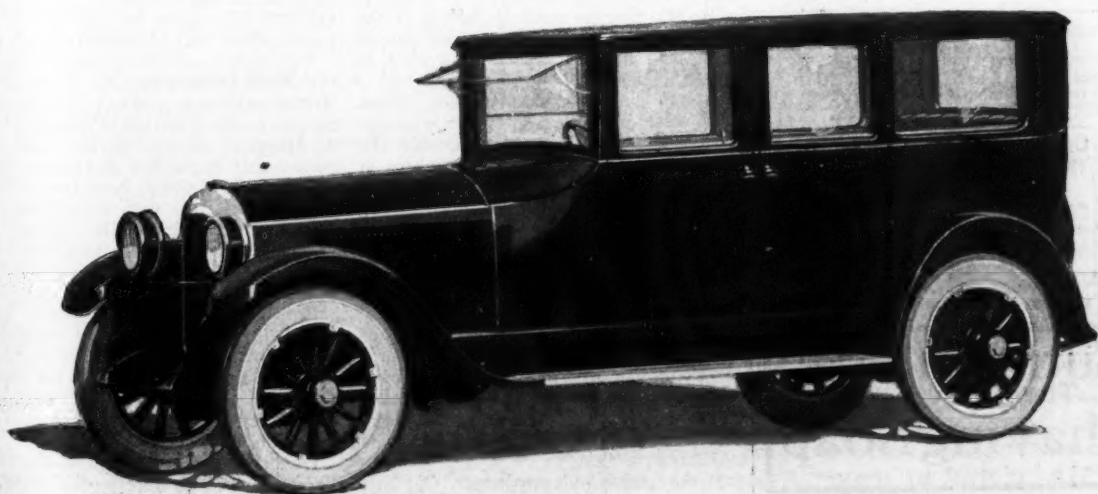
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scarf swathed about the haick that shaded his face, the scarlet leather boots he wore—this was the dress of a chief.

Whoever he was he had saved her from worse than death. And a sudden inexplicable desire came to her to explain to this strange, taciturn Arab the situation in which he had found her. She swung her horse nearer.

"I oughtn't to have ridden alone," she began jerkily. "I know that. But I was quite close to Algiers—it seemed safe enough—and I had a reason for what I did. One has to be alone—sometimes. I didn't think there could be any danger. It all happened so suddenly—"

"It is always dangerous for a woman to ride alone in Algeria," he said gravely.

It was his tone rather than the actual words that sent the hot blood rushing to her face and reduced her to a silence that lasted until they sighted the outskirts of Algiers.

With a sign to Hoscine, Carew drew rein. "My servant will attend you, madame. I can go no further," he said abruptly.

She sat for a moment without answering; then she looked up quickly, her lips quivering uncontrollably.

"I don't know what to say—how to thank you—"

He cut her short almost rudely.

"I need no thanks, madame. Put the one deed against the other—and do not judge the Arabs too harshly. They are as other men, no better and no worse."

She shook her head with a tremulous little smile and for a time she seemed to

be struggling with herself. Then she flung her hand out with an odd gesture of appeal.

"If you won't let me thank you, will you let me be still further in your debt?" she said unsteadily.

"As how?"

"The horse I rode," she faltered. "I—I—my husband values him. Can you help me to get him back—and soon?"

Surprised that she should seek his aid in what was clearly a police matter, Carew glanced at her with a gathering frown, but what he saw in her eyes made him look away quickly.

"You shall have your horse, madame. I pledge you my word," he said shortly. A look of curious relief swept over her tense face.

"Then I shan't worry about him—any more," she said with a shaky laugh. And reining her horse nearer, again she held out her hand. "Won't you tell me your name? I should like to know it, to remember it in—in—" She choked back a rising sob. "Please!" she whispered.

He turned to her slowly, his eyes almost black in their somber intensity. "I have many names," he replied unwillingly as though he were forcing himself to speak.

"Then tell me one," she pleaded.

Still he hesitated, his square chin thrust out obstinately.

"I am called—El Hakim," he said at last reluctantly. And touching his forehead in a perfunctory salaam he wheeled his impatient horse and spurred him into a headlong gallop.

Marny Geradine's second dramatic encounter with El Hakim in a strange byway of Algiers—see "The Desert Healer" in November COSMOPOLITAN.

\$ XX

(Continued from page 58)

in the hall until the letter could be signed for.

Barney had no intention of wasting minutes cooling his heels in the ante-chamber of this king of villains, Abner Locke, while his lady in distress was doubtless despairing of rescue. So, as soon as the hateful, smug servant was around the turn of the stairs going up, Barney followed him. Doubtless that letter was going to the place that he, Barney, wanted to be.

By the time he reached the top of the flight the butler had disappeared but an open door down the corridor seemed to point out the way.

Barney paused outside the door. There were voices inside, a man's and a woman's—Margaret Grey's—he'd remember the sweetness of her inflections anywhere in the world. Just now there was a note of distress in her tones that kindled fire in Barney's blood.

The man was saying: "Don't feel bad about it, honey. I'll make it up to you."

"Make it up to me?" she repeated scornfully. "As if mere money and luxury could compensate a woman for the loss of her ideals, everything she cares about."

"You'll get over that," the man counseled drily. "Ideals get stepped on every day. What's a lot more important is the fact that you haven't kissed me yet. Come and attend to that."

Barney didn't wait any longer. Old man

Psychological Moment was yelling that this was his cue. Barney crossed the threshold.

The butler was there, standing at one side with the special delivery letter in his hand, waiting apologetically for an opportunity to call his master's attention to it.

Before him was Margaret with her lovely back toward him. Item: You could tell it was lovely because it was all exposed by a simple but seductive evening gown—evidently Margaret had dressed for the part in which she had been unwillingly cast.

Facing her, and facing Barney too, was the villain of the piece, Mr. Abner Locke. Barney could not, perhaps, have described his preconceived notion of the appearance of Margaret Grey's oppressor but it is certain that in the flesh he violated all the traditions. He should have been a burly, thick-necked man with a bristling mustache and a leering smile. Barney had visualized the face in his fond forecast as to the way he was going to alter it with his own fists.

But you couldn't raise your hands against this chap. He was old, not doddering, but he looked brittle. He had white sideburns like the principal of the Sunday School that Barney had attended once when they caught him unawares. Mr. Locke was old and he was fussy.

Doubtless that made him all the worse. These senile roués were terrible influences

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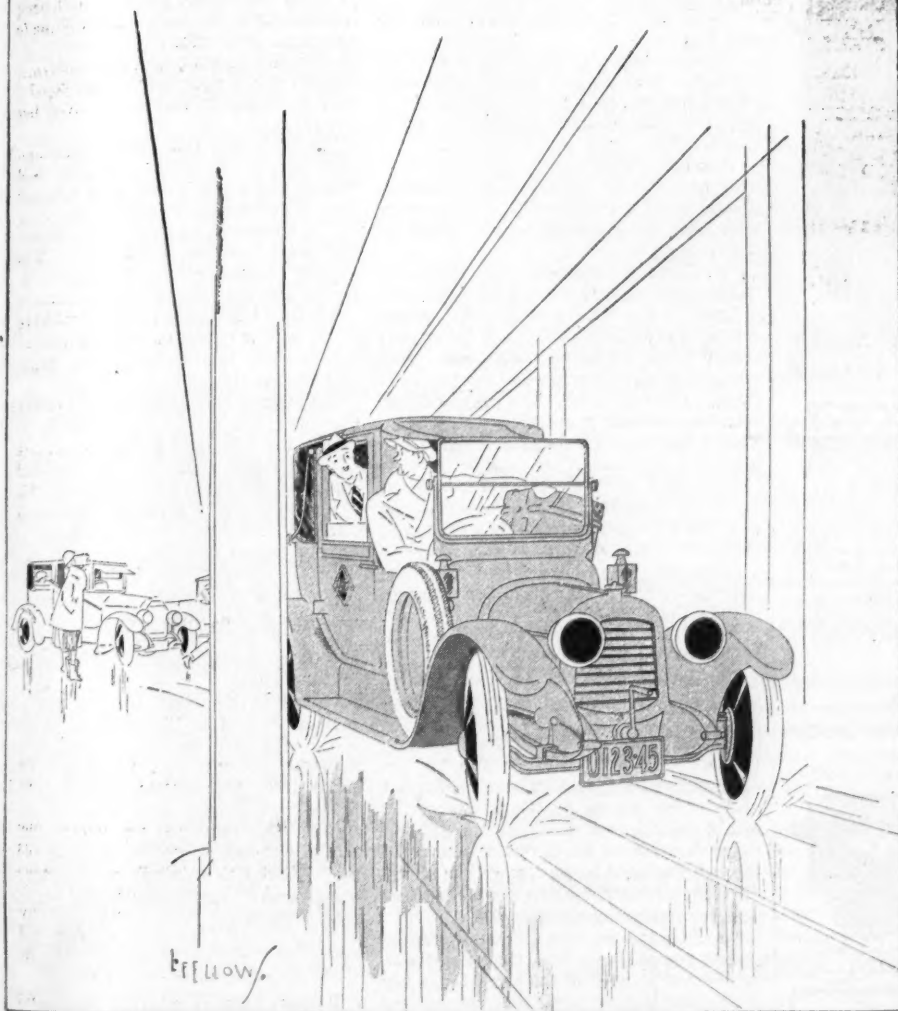
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"Hey, I want to catch that train, but I'm not fussy about being wrapped around one of these pillars!"

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on the lives of young girls. The idea that the old toad expected the beautiful young creature to kiss him aroused all of Barney's gorge in revolt.

Kiss him?

Not while he lived to fight.

Barney was getting all set to fling up his right hand in the attitude made famous by the traffic cop at Forty-second and Broadway when Abner Locke, the old hound above designated, happened to look up and catch Barney in midgesture so to speak.

"Who the Sam-hill is this?" he demanded.

Without waiting for anyone else to introduce him Barney stepped forward. "I am a friend of this young lady's and I have come to take her out of your dirty clutches."

Margaret turned and gasped.

"What is this young maniac talking about?" The old betrayer of women addressed the question to the world at large.

"I'm talking about you, you dirty cur," Barney expatiated, "you and your foul bargain with this young lady whose complaisance you think you have purchased with a twenty dollar bill. But you're wrong. You haven't bought anything. The deal is off. The twenty dollar you sent her was counterfeit. Here it is. Take it back and be thankful I don't ram it down your throat."

He hurled the money on the table at Mr. Locke's right hand and turned to the girl. "Come, Margaret, I will take care of you."

Margaret seemed surprised but she followed readily enough when Barney took her hand and led her toward the door.

"Stop that damn fool!" commanded the master of the house.

The butler tried to obey but collided with something that sat him down, gasping, in the corner.

"Help!" shouted Mr. Locke. "James, Horace, Norman, guard the stairs."

Barney did not wait to hear the further plans of his enemy or the names of the rest of the help but picked up the girl and threw her across his shoulder and sped through the corridor and down the stairs, disposing of two housemen and a chauffeur with his right midiron en route.

The taxi was waiting. The only unfortunate circumstance was that there was another car in front of the house too, a big limousine. Barney was under the impression that it was the chauffeur of that very bus who had just skinned Barney's knuckles by letting his jaw get in the way of them. Perhaps they could get away before the chauffeur would show signs of reviving interest in the affairs of this life.

So Barney tossed his fair burden into the interior of the cab and ordered laconically, "Beat it!"

Zip! Clash! Zung! The driver worked her through the changes of gears into high in rapid succession and was half way to the corner before Barney got the door closed.

"You're wonderful," breathed the girl into his hungry ears.

"I love you," he explained apologetically. "I couldn't do anything else. Damnation!"

The last word in his remarks had, properly speaking, no relation whatever to what had gone before and was prompted by a swift glance out of the rear window. The big limousine was starting up in

pursuit with men still climbing into it as it moved.

Barney was thus saved from making a decision as to whether he was justified in kissing his fascinating fellow passenger. "Can you lose that car behind us?" he demanded of the taxi-driver.

"I'll try," Gasoline Gus replied in the immortal words of somebody or other, at the same time stepping on the gas.

The pursuing caravel, however, apparently had something under the hood which justified the claims made by the modest manufacturer who didn't care who saw his two page three color advertisements in all the leading magazines of the world. The taxicab ran a poor race. You could see that it would be overhauled in the first two miles.

Barney called this obvious fact to the attention of his chief navigating officer. "Can't you dodge up an alley and throw 'em off the track?" he suggested.

The chauffeur, on two wheels, turned at the next narrow intersection. Immediately thereafter ensued a squealing of brakes and the odor of burning tires.

It was a blind alley solidly blocked by a brick wall a hundred feet in from the street. The taxi stopped with her nose just grazing the wall.

No need to look to find out if the limousine was following. Their brakes were yelling for help right behind.

"Better pay your fare now, governor," suggested the canny chauffeur.

Barney waved this ignoble precaution to one side. He didn't have time to pay him for one reason and for another he didn't have any money. So, instead, he seized Margaret Grey firmly in his arms, gave her that kiss he had been debating about and descended from his chariot to meet the half-dozen gentlemen who were clamoring for his society.

Owing to his early training and also perhaps in part to the invigorating effect of the stimulant he had just had Barney managed to entertain his guests quite successfully for several minutes—entertained two of them to a standstill, so to speak. But they had the advantage of him in numbers as well as in the fact that they seemed to recognize no law against using monkey wrenches for other purposes than wrenching.

V

BARNEY came to with the dawn peeping coquettishly into the alley. Out of the blank that had been the night he seemed to recollect someone having kissed him as he lay there while someone else urged plaintively: "You'll have to come with us, Miss Margaret. He isn't going to die anyway and his chauffeur will take him home."

Something was wrong with this prophecy somewhere because Barney wasn't home by any means even if he was, probably, still alive. He was very patently lying on a lumpy brick pavement without any springs under it.

What time was it? He reached in the watch pocket of his trousers. Empty save for a bit of paper.

Barney tried to read what was written on it. This was difficult because it wasn't very light yet and besides the left set of Barney's eyelids refused to open.

But hope drove him to a supreme effort. It was doubtless a message from her.

The thought thrilled him to such an extent that he strained his poor throbbing faculties to their utmost capacity and finally deciphered this:

"I have took your watch for what you owe me. You don't seem to have no address on you no place so I hope you rest well here."

There was no signature but Barney knew it was not a billet from Margaret. No one but a taxi pirate could have been so unfeeling. Barney groaned. Nothing but a love letter could possibly have compensated him for the way he felt.

Well, that sort of thing was out of his life forever. Margaret was the one woman for him and she was dead to him or worse than dead.

Barney got up and squared his shoulders. Ouch! How that attitude of resolution hurt! Barney decided not to look quite so determined and slouched a little.

He walked home. Who would want to ride on a street car, even if he had the price, looking like the tail end of a misspent life? In the privacy of his chambers he tried cold water, witch hazel, arnica and hair tonic on his blue eye with no perceptible effect. And Barney had to be at the bank that morning!

He spent the time which should have been devoted to breakfast in making up a story to account for the puffiness and purplishness of his features. What he finally evolved was an account of how he ran into the edge of a door in the dark, which shows how feebly his intellect was functioning.

The story didn't register very well with his associates at the bank but the snarl in his voice and the murder in his scowl when they laughed silenced even the whispered kidding behind his back. Customers who could, after taking one look at Barney, backed away hastily and transacted their business at some other window.

Barney was so mortified that he held his head down and did not look up unless it was positively necessary even when a depositor stood at his window.

His head ached pretty much and he was darn grouchy in general when the clanging of a gong at three o'clock signaled the watchman to close the door. No more customers would be admitted. Barney would have to attend to the queue in front of his window but after they were through he could relax, let down and be just as miserable as he pleased.

The queue dwindled. There was only one left. Barney, without looking up, could tell by the diminishing shuffle of feet about how long his line was.

A bundle of currency was shoved through his window with a typewritten slip on top requesting a time deposit receipt for the amount.

Barney ran through the bills and in mid career stopped like a hound which has stumbled over a fresh trail.

There was a "phoney" in the lot, a counterfeit twenty. He looked more closely.

It was the very same twenty he had carried around in his pocket the night before.

Barney looked up to see who was trying to pass it now and his eyes, even the bad one, got the shock of their lives.

Margaret Grey was on the other side of the grating. And she was smiling at him.

Barney was torn between seventeen emotions. Having absolutely nothing in

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the way of experience to guide him he fell back upon an official manner.

"Madame," he said coolly, "this twenty dollar bill is counterfeit and it is my duty to confiscate it." He had the stamp in his hand ready to imprint the damning word across its face.

"Don't you dare to mark that bill!" she commanded.

"Why not?"

"Mr. Locke doesn't want it spoiled."

"Oh, he doesn't. Why doesn't he present it himself instead of sending his—?" The word which rose to the tip of Barney's tongue was a harsh one and he censored it.

"Because I asked him to let me hand it to you, that's why. But he wants to see you."

"And I want to see him." The lust to do physical violence was still on him.

"Where is he?"

"In the president's office."

"Under arrest?"

"Scarcely. He's one of the directors of this bank and incidentally its largest stockholder, I believe."

So that was it! Barney set his teeth. He was about to be fired, that was pretty certain, but he wouldn't give the old villain the satisfaction of seeing him squirm.

Barney entered the president's private office with as much dignity as may be assumed by a man whose left eye will only open about an eighth of an inch even if it is quite prismatic to look at.

Abner Locke was there alone. Barney shut the door after himself. This was to be a man to man reckoning between two males who hated each other. Barney was going to lose—that was a foregone conclusion—but before he was fired absolutely he intended to speak his mind freely and, if sufficiently provoked, paste his senile rival just once.

"Well?" he began truculently.

The old man looked him over and started to laugh.

"Stop it!" Barney commanded.

"Can't do it, son, even to oblige. Are you the young man my granddaughter has fallen in love with?"

"Your granddaughter?" The revolutionary effect of the announcement of relationship was so great that it almost entirely obliterated the significance of the final and major statement. "Are you Miss Grey's grandfather?"

"Of course I'm her grandfather."

Her grandfather! Barney began to like him right away—the mere fact that he was a bluff and irascible old man only endeared him to the young bank official. Old men should be like that.

But why, if she was the grandchild to luxury and magnificence, should Margaret Grey have been living in a shack like the home of the estimable but indubitably poverty-stricken Mrs. MacCurdy? Barney asked himself that and finally sprung the question on Mr. Locke.

"Why?" snorted that individual. "It's because she is so pig-headed that she would argue with the Angel Gabriel about the correct way to sound the A on his own bugle. She is a lovely child in other respects but she inherits a lot of obstinacy

—from her father's family, I guess. I know that her mother, my daughter, was so sweet and mild that she died of it."

Barney could well imagine that any child of Abner Locke's would have to be sweet and mild, at least by comparison.

"You and she disagreed about something?" Barney suggested tentatively.

"We did. I wanted her to meet some of the good, practical, hard-headed business men I'm associated with and look 'em over with the idea of becoming a Mrs. some day."

"And she wouldn't?"

"Wouldn't is right. Said she'd have some romance in her life or starve to death first—had a lot to say about the sordidness of men who think about nothing but money. She didn't give a whoop about money, she said, would support herself before she'd fall in with my wishes. But, by Hecuba," the old man chuckled, "I got my own way even if she didn't intend it in the least!"

"Got your way?" echoed a voice at the door, a delightful, sweet voice even if it was raised a little now in indignation.

"Got tired of listening through the key-hole and came in, did you?" diagnosed her grandfather rapidly. "Well, I suppose you might as well."

"How did you get your own way?"

Margaret repeated.

Mr. Locke laughed acidly. "This young man is certainly a hard-headed business man—concrete-headed almost—he thinks about nothing but money—and now you're going to marry him."

"Granddad!" Tons of reproach were heaped into the word.

"What's the matter?" The old man looked from one to the other, puzzled.

"Good heavens, doesn't he know it yet? Have I ruined the courtship?"

Margaret was blushing so furiously that for the first time in her life she could not tell her grandfather where to head in.

Barney realized that now, if ever, was his opportunity to fill in an embarrassing pause.

He did.

"Before you go out, Mr. Locke," he said suggestively, "would you mind telling me where you got that twenty dollar bill?"

"The old man chuckled. "It's good, isn't it? Fooled me but my eyes ain't as sharp as yours. Yes, I'll tell you where I got it if you'll promise not to ask the address of the party until you are a member of my family."

"All right," Barney agreed reluctantly. "Who passed it on you?"

"A poor but honest bootlegger, son. So I can't have him arrested unless they change the Constitution of my country. Now if you and Margaret will—"

He might have said more but Barney opened and closed the door for him.

That done he came up behind the girl he had met the evening before. He couldn't expect her to take him seriously if he stood where she could see him.

"Margaret," he asked huskily, "did you ever kiss a man with a black eye before?"

"No, Barney. What's it like?"

"I don't know. You'll have to tell me."

More of Frank R. Adams's sparkling tales of youth and love will enliven future COSMOPOLITAN pages. Watch for them.

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Ponjola

(Continued from Page 79)

"Well, you've got to know. I came because I'm broke, but that's not reason enough. Emma Guthrie's broke too. I broke him . . . and he's got a wife. I asked the Count to give him this job, but he can't get on with Emma. So I've come until Emma strikes something. That's all, and be damned to you!"

He walked away and things buzzed that day at the Oof-Bird. After dinner Desmond made the *amende honorable*.

"I don't know why you should have thought me worth explaining to, but I appreciate your doing so and apologize."

"That's all right—thanks, Desmond," said Druro quietly. "I don't give a curse as you know for most people's opinions, but I didn't think you need have a lower one of me than was strictly necessary."

As the days passed Desmond realized that he was drinking more moderately. Something of the old friendship between them returned.

But the Bang-up continued to be a barrier to entire harmony between the two. Druro's habit of stopping there to get a drink too often resulted in a visit to Loochia's sitting room. Sometimes Desmond went on to Wankelo alone, but always with an uneasy feeling that this was exactly what Loochia desired.

A day came, however, when Desmond rode on alone, leaving Druro to drink with Eric in the bar or take tea with Loochia, whichever his heart desired. And Druro did not trouble to laugh at him or excuse himself, for Constant Lypiatt had used up the entire stock of civility of both of them.

It was most unfortunate that he should turn up in his car with Mrs. Lypiatt just as they were leaving, and that Druro's position as acting manager constrained him to stand, answering questions.

What Lypiatt said, however, was less important than what he left unsaid. It was the sneer in his light, hard eyes that roused a man's devils as he sat there immaculate in perfectly cut clothes and boots—gloved, too, in a country where men had almost forgotten the use of that article of attire!

Desmond found the scene too much for his nerves, and lashing at his horse rode off, giving Gay Lypiatt a mordant glance as he passed.

Druro did not catch up to him till just before the Bang-up; then only a couple of sentences were exchanged.

"I may not turn up at Wankelo," said one.

"I suppose you intend to stay here and get drunk," said the other.

Druro, however, did not happen to be drunk when they met later. His eyes were a little redder, but his mood was gay as the town was cheerful. For the High Court sessions were on, and everyone made this an occasion for coming in. A jolly crowd had assembled at the club, and Desmond met the Public Prosecutor and various law court officials. The Judge, one of the most popular men in the country, an Oxford Blue and an all round sportsman, insisted on their both dining with him. It was a great evening, and Druro's soul emerged from the dark cave of misery where it sojourned and he too showed

himself witty and well read, with a mind that could flash like a blade.

When at last they took the road for camp, the whole country was flooded with the milk-white moonlight peculiar to Africa; both had recovered their equanimity and Desmond felt happy. But his serenity received a rude blow as they neared the Bang-up.

"I promised Mrs. Luff to look in on the way back," Druro announced.

"But it's nearly midnight," protested Desmond. "They'll be in bed."

"Ohno! Luff's away—gone to Bulawayo—and that poor little woman's nervous alone. You needn't come if you're in a hurry."

But Desmond had no fancy for riding alone on a deserted road. Also this whim of Mrs. Luff's for the late society of Druro intrigued him and called for investigation. So when Druro rapped smartly on the door and Love-a-little opened, Desmond, stepping from the shadows, was able to afford her a piquant surprise.

Druro at once sat on the sofa, but Desmond paced the room with a cynical smile on his lips.

Loochia gave him a baleful glance, then she too sat on the sofa, pouring whisky and lighting cigarettes. Druro settled himself with a comfortable sigh. Loochia's policy was to "freeze Desmond out" if possible. But his was quite otherwise. By his restless amblings he plainly indicated an intention to wait for Druro.

The two on the sofa encircled in the glow of the red lamp talked intermittently. Loochia's voice was sweeter than honey in the honeycomb. When her brown-gold head seemed nearer Druro's shoulder than was strictly necessary, Desmond announced like a bell:

"Quarter to one, Druro!"

Druro gave a jump but Loochia soothed him with the spurt of the siphon in a glass. Ensued for Desmond more restless inspection of the pictures. He dipped into one or two novels and fingered the music.

A small knob in the wall next intrigued him, and turning it softly, to his surprise a door yielded, easily, as though it had been ajar and ready to open at a sign. It was the door of a wall cupboard, tall enough for a man to stand upright in. And a man was there, though not standing upright. Perhaps he too was tired from long waiting, for he squatted tight and snug upon his haunches with head bent. He did not raise it to look up but there was no mistaking those well arranged locks across the scanty scalp of Eric Luff! The black cavalry mustache quivered slightly, perhaps with disappointment, when the door closed silently as it had opened, but with a turn to the handle that would enforce knocking from one who insisted on emerging.

"One o'clock, Druro!" the words came sharp-edged.

"By Jove, is it?" There was the trace of apology in Druro's now dreamy voice, but he did not stir. Mrs. Luff spoke over her shoulder mockingly:

"I'm afraid you do not care to face the five miles alone, Mr. Desmond. Is that it?"

Desmond's answer was to open the piano and blast the silence of the rose tinted room by a crash of sound. Such wild, unearthly strains might have raised the dead, but enough that it raised Druro to stand staring red-eyed with misery as only music had power to make him.



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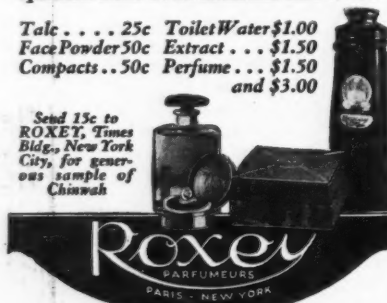


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The unearthly music died down to despairing blows of sound. It seemed as if someone was knocking, in an agony of fear. One last knock—very faint, like a dying tap—then silence.

Desmond arose, slammed down the piano and grasped his cap. The sweat was thick on Lundi Druro's forehead. Mrs. Luff, furiously angry, turned on the pianist:

"Do you call that music? What is that thing?"

"That thing," he politely replied, "is a composition by a Russian called Rachmaninoff. A man buried alive shrieks and knocks upon his coffin in a frenzy to get out. At first he is strong, but the clamor of the wind is stronger and howls him down. At the end of the storm his knocks have died away to the irrevocable silence of death."

Druro, already standing outside in the moonlight, seemed in haste to be gone.

"I wish you would keep your abominable music to yourself," remarked Loochia rudely and contemptuously.

"The knocking disturbed you, I suppose?" said Desmond. "Not so much difference between a coffin and a cupboard as one would think, is there?" With that he followed Druro.

Loochia, trembling with rage, slammed the door, turning back into her room, and Luff, presently emerging from the cupboard, stood stretching his cramped limbs.

"You botched it that time, didn't you?" he snarled.

"Oh, go to the devil!" was her response.

"That's all very well. He's drunk all my whisky and how much further on are we with Lypiatt's plan?"

"You and your Lypiatt!" She turned on him shrilly. "Do you think it was to please you I was willing to trap him? Drunk or sober, he's worth a dozen of such beasts."

"Well, drunk or sober you'll never get him now," answered Eric with a goatlike leer. "That blighter Desmond has botched it once and for all."

CHAPTER VIII

IF HE could have known of the difficulty being experienced by the blighter to keep Druro from returning to the Bang-up to wring the neck of its valiant proprietor, Luff might have congratulated himself instead of bullying Loochia. For as they rode home Desmond thought it as well to unload his mind on the subject of the Luffs and their beneficent intentions. He was convinced that, abetted by Lypiatt, the bright pair had been working all along to ruin Druro body and soul and make it impossible for him to continue in Rhodesia; but Lypiatt's name was left out of the indictment.

"There Luff sat"—Desmond's tone was contemptuous—"squatting on his heels—waiting! Of course she knew he was there, and equally of course I was not expected."

"The blessed beggars! How I'd like to twist Eric's knobby nose! It ought to be done, too... it's a public duty—"

"No you don't!" interrupted Desmond firmly. "Have some sense, Druro. How'd you like to have to marry Loochia to appease outraged Rhodesia?"

Druro's laugh was melancholy.

"Don't try to persuade me, Desmond, that any woman would want to marry me."

Desmond answered cheerfully:

"A jolly good job for you. Precious few of them are worth a threepenny piece." After a moment's pause he added, grinning: "There's not one of them on this earth will ever inveigle me into marriage."

Druro turned and glanced at him with a bitter and thoughtful smile.

"You know a heap, don't you, Desmond, considering the fewness of your bright young years? But I dare say you're right—and a darn sight shrewder than I am, on this subject anyway. A couple of years ago—in Paris—I met a lovely girl whom just to glance at was to believe in, or so it seemed to a damn fool like me. Certainly she had tragedy stamped on her, but I could have sworn that the look of her eyes, the way she carried her head, the lovely depth of her voice, spelled something within that was fine and proud and shining, something a man could live by and die for!"

He gave a deep sigh. Desmond's mordant railery seemed dried up. He rode silent and impenetrable.

"Yet within a week of meeting her," the narrator continued drearily, "I knew that she was a rotter like the rest of 'em."

Another uninterrupted silence.

"A man whose word I could take showed me a picture on the ship coming out—a jolly group taken at an English country house—and she was in it, an unmarried girl then, famous for her beauty and wit. Shortly after that time she had married a well known peer, famous too, one of the great *partis* of the day. My friend who knew him said he was a top hole fellow. And she—well, she was just crooked. On the very wedding day he found out how she had double-crossed him. The other man turned up, there was a fight with revolvers in her presence—and both men were killed. At the inquest she was dumb as a fish. No one could get any change out of her. And as she was the only one who knew, the truth was never unfolded. But she got away with everything in sight: money, estate and of course the title as well."

"Quite a little haul!" said Desmond. "What was her name?"

"Oh, never mind names! I wonder you did not read about it at the time, though. However, her name in England was mud. Even her own people cast her out. She was a sort of exile when I met her—living somewhere in the Latin Quarter."

"They're not so particular there, I suppose?"

"God knows. But one thing I can tell you... you'd never have believed it of her, Desmond. And when I remember her—I don't know what the devil makes me remember her so well tonight—I could swear in the face of God Himself that the whole yarn is a lie." He turned angrily and suddenly on his companion. "So that's *that*. And apropos, don't let me hear so much of your cheap stuff on the subject of women in future please, or I shall be obliged to deprive you of my distinguished society."

Perhaps Desmond was tired or really impressed. At any rate it was with a manner singularly subdued that he bade Druro good night.

The Count continuing ill, the charge of the mine devolved upon Druro. Everything was kept at top notch speed, and he slave drove for Lypiatt as he would never

have done for himself. But in spite of every effort the daily scrape of gold remained despicable.

The Count, when told of the state of things, did not seem unduly distressed.

"She'll be all right," said he comfortably. "No need to worry. She'll right herself before the end of the month—you'll see."

Hope never dies in the mining man's breast and Druro hoped daily for an improvement. Desmond could almost have sworn that he prayed for it.

"What gets me," he explained to Desmond, "is that the mine is only behaving as I expected her to from my original sampling. I couldn't understand *then* how the Count got his good scrapes of sixteen, eighteen, twenty, sometimes even thirty ounces, and I don't now. Yet if other men can get gold out of her, why in Columbus can't I?"

Fortunately Lypiatt kept away during this trying time. The Count began to mend of his fever and before the end of another week was crawling feebly about once more. Lypiatt came over the following day—always with his black bag, as Desmond noticed—and he and the Count had a pow-wow in the office. The scrape that night went up to thirty-five ounces! Desmond asked Druro what he had been worrying about, and the Count from his bed openly derided him as a mining expert.

"I *knew* she'd be all right. I've told Con Lypiatt to let the bank know we shall have a thousand pounds this month!"

"A thousand pounds!" Desmond stared, but Druro for once made no comment. He only looked very curiously at the Count.

At the end of the month, even as the Count had prophesied, a thousand pounds' worth of gold went to the bank. And the same morning Druro went to the Count's hut. The latter, still abed, had a cheerful smile upon his lips.

"I'm clearing out," said Druro abruptly. The happy smile was wiped from the Count's lips.

"What in hell for?"

"Purely to suit my own principles—such as they are," was the steely reply.

The two men looked at each other. They were old friends. But the end had come and the Count knew it.

"You think things are not square, Lundi?" he mumbled, and all at once he looked a sorry and craggy old man.


"I don't think," said Druro. "I'm a mining man and my instinct has *known* all along, but drink blunted and friendship blinded it. Then of course I didn't expect to be let down by you."

"Don't rub it in," said the other miserably. "I have felt ashamed of myself when dropping the amalgam in the box . . . not only of the dirty deal, but of having dragged you into it."

"I suppose the idea was that, as a pal, I was safe not to give the show away? Or perhaps you thought I had fallen so low I wouldn't care what I did as long as it meant money for whisky?"

The man on the bed shrank at the knife-like quality of the other's tone. But it was not the Count so much as his own soul that Druro was arraigning. He was not worth even friendship, then! All things fell from him one after the other.

He stared unseeing at Baron von Blauhimmel, and that Prussian nobleman, shamed and stricken, misunderstood the stare. He thought Druro required details.



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"That'll do," interrupted Druro roughly. "Your trust and Lypiatt's mistrust weigh about level as compliments, and I'm much obliged. But we needn't speak any further of friendship. You and he are quite safe from being given away by me, though not through any virtue of your own. There's just one little condition I must attach, however—"

The Count looked up beseechingly but Druro laughed in his face.

"Yes, that's the condition right enough—you close down at once."

"Not at once, Lundi? Not right away? Give us a few days at least—"

"Not a day . . . Not another ounce."

"Con'll never forgive me!"

"Forgiveness!" gibed Druro. "Tell him he's lucky to be out of jail."

He strode straight from the hut to his own, where it did not take him ten minutes to sling his possessions into a kit bag.

In a short time he crossed to where Desmond sat outside his hut picking ticks off the Count's pointer bitch.

"I'm clearing out, Desmond. We'd better say good by."

The other looked up, galvanized.

"What's wrong?"

Desmond, taken by surprise, wore a certain innocent and childlike expression in his open-eyed, open-lipped stare, and the sight of him pulled at Druro's heart in curious fashion. For a moment he did not desire to go away and die like a dog on the veldt but to be alive, as this youngster was—satirical and jeering on the surface, but clean and sweet in his ways, no lies and trickery; no gold stealing, no drunkenness! But the next moment despair ate him again.

"The property is not in need of my services, and I've made up my mind to quit." He added with a wry smile: "The Count will tell you all about it, no doubt."

"Where are you going to?"

"I must be up to something," Druro said vaguely but without dejection. He was never dejected in manner, however deep his soul was sunk in the pit; perhaps because he never felt pity for himself—only disgust. Even having made up his mind that his fate was to drink himself to death, and the sooner the better, he blamed no one but himself. He stood there very erect before Desmond, holding out his hand in farewell.

"To hell with the sea boots," he was thinking, and he might have been ready to kill if he had known that behind the clear eyes that met his bloodshot ones was pity profound; that what Desmond saw was a boy who had been man-handled in the game of life, rough-housed, knocked out by one foul blow after another, a boy who having looked at all the world with truthful eyes and soul unclouded had been all the easier mark for "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

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At any rate he did not guess the truth, and Desmond had no power to reveal it. Human souls are aloof and lonely things that hide from one another in their anguish. So they parted casually enough.

"See you later," was Druro's last remark, thoughtlessly false, for he had no intention of the kind.

"Didn't mean to deceive him," he reproached himself as he rode away. "Nice kid! Wonder who he reminds me of sometimes? It can't be Gay for he's nothing like her. No one is like her . . . Oh my God!"

He was alone on the veldt and could groan aloud without disturbing anything but a group of asvovels luxuriously lunching upon a dead ox.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER Druro's departure, Desmond sat staring at the scenery with a brooding discontent. His thoughts were not good and a headache that had been troubling him for some days did not improve them. Further possessions included a bad taste in the mouth, a pulse that beat like a young drum, and a sense of coming disaster. What he did not realize was that his first dose of malaria was due, and overdue—in fact, it had arrived.

Within an hour of the historic conversation in the hut all work was at a full stop. After luncheon Lypiatt appeared. The Count had dispatched a message to him by native runner, but this he missed owing to his having already left the Agate for Wankelo. The situation, then, found him all unprepared, and a call at the Bang-up en route had added nothing to his amiability. His eyes were flaring like torch-lit water as he strode up the slope, heavily laden as usual—and the first sight they fell upon was Desmond lounging upon a packing case, while Jimmie Spelter made a final effort to get himself white with paraffin and waste.

"What in Latin and Greek has come to this unsanctified and colorful mine?" demanded its owner in cold and terrible wrath. Desmond, who never made answer to bad language, observed him superciliously from behind a cigarette, but Jimmie, resplendent as a lily of the field and of a redundant odor, laconically obliged.

"She's G. I."

Straightway dumbness fell upon Constant Lypiatt. The stream of eloquence was dammed. His hands twitched and his eyes flared, but words were denied him even to inquire the whereabouts of the Count. Instinct alone seemed to guide his footsteps to the hut of that convalescent gentleman. What occurred behind the closed door, history of the defunct Oof-Bird, written or unwritten, recordeth not. Certain it is that the affliction of dumbness miraculously fell from Lypiatt, for the sound of his voice, not loud but fluent, could be plainly heard.

"Let us now praise famous men!" said Desmond to Jimmie Spelter, and kicked a smart tattoo on the packing case. The quotation was wasted on that anointed artisan as it never would have been on the parson's son who had left camp that morning. Desmond reflected dolorously upon this, but there was compensation in the sight of Lypiatt emerging once more from the bedchamber of the sick man, still hugging the white man's burden. He



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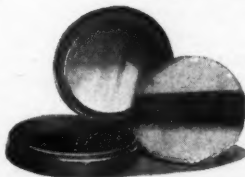
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approached and surprisingly addressed the two idlers:

"I think the Count has done quite right, and"—with a slightly factitious smile—"I have absolute faith in his judgment. The reef having pinched out, it was no use carrying on even for another hour." Desmond's mouth opened in a wide smile of admiration at the aplomb and finish of this statement. "For a time," he continued calmly, "operations will be confined to development work only. A reef can make as well as pinch, and who knows, perhaps within a month we shall all be back again."

Jimmie Spelter, as clean as he was able to get and with his pockets full of wages, now set out for town. Thereafter Desmond made an attempt to pack up his own belongings for departure, but about five minutes later, his brow being dewed with a fine pearly sweat and his brain having changed into cotton wool, he sat down by the door instead and gazed dreamily at Chauma and Kaboli. A heat haze shrouded them like twin brides in mystic, amethystine veils, and he had a great desire to set them down in paint. But the desire to sit still was even greater, and when dusk fell at last he was still sitting there, dreaming.

His limbs had turned leaden and his wits grew woollier and woollier. Finally, when everything was pitch dark and no sound broke the stillness except the dull thud of a drum in the compound, he had just sense enough to go into the hut, close the door behind him and cast himself down, boots and all.

When next he took an interest in life it was to find that the features of his surroundings had changed to something entirely unfamiliar. Instead of irregular mud walls, distempered sky-blue ones rose about him. There was also a real washstand—not a packing case—and a real hanging cupboard of polished walnut—not nails driven into a plank. Moreover, the bed he lay in had fresh white sheets. On the wall facing him hung a brown print of that idyllic picture by Maurice Grieffenhagen in which a shepherd and his love, standing midst poppies and sunshine, are lost to all but Nature's song in their hearts. The only familiar objects in the room were his own trunk and kit bag piled neatly under the window. The window had white muslin curtains.

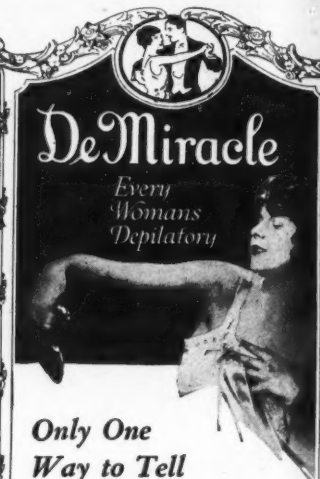
This was all very intriguing, but there was something disconcerting about it too, though Desmond could not, for a moment, identify it. Slowly he turned upon the pillow seeking enlightenment, but found only further riddles. A ribboned baby's cot stood between the bed and the wall.

"Am I going mad? Have I gone mad?" he softly demanded of the universe, and next inquiringly held up one hand, for it had a strange feel to it. No wonder! On his shapely brown wrist, instead of the usual trim pajama cuff hung the laced-edge sleeve of a woman's nightgown!

Slowly then he held up both hands—feeling weak and incapable and as if he had come a long and desperate journey—then slowly and weakly they came down again, over his face, and he gave a soft groan.

"Oh Lord! It's out! Somebody knows!"

He lay very still awhile, eyes covered by those brown and beautifully shaped fin-



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gers, sick with misery and anger to think that through this accident of illness the carefully guarded secret of nearly two years was out. And he did not even know who it was that shared that secret! But knowledge was not long delayed. The door opened quietly and someone came in with a gentle swish of skirts and stood by the bed. A warm, mothering hand rested on those covering fingers.

"My poor child."

Desmond, recognizing the voice, threw off the hands, staring, to see Mrs. Hope. A kind and pitying smile flickered on her humorous, long-lipped mouth.

"My poor child! Don't be alarmed, don't upset yourself. Nobody knows but me."

An immense relief came into Desmond's eyes and a long sigh from the fever-roughened lips.

"Oh . . . thank you, *thank* you, Mrs. Hope! What a trump you are!"

"And what a minx *you* are," said Mrs. Hope, and sitting on the bed took the patient's hands and held them tight and tenderly. "To *think* of your being a woman all the time! Taking us in like that! Oh my dear, how *could* you do it? A beautiful, wonderful woman like you . . . living a wild life . . . amongst all those men!"

A faint, derisive smile appeared on Desmond's face.

"I suppose I'm in your maternity home?"

"Yes. You've got malaria, but not very badly I hope. A week or two's good nursing will put you right."

"But how on earth did I get here?"

"Constant Lypiatt brought you."

Desmond started on the pillow with a cry: "What?"

"No—don't be alarmed. I tell you no one knows except me. Lypiatt had just lifted you off your bed into the car and brought you here. He handed you over quite casually as 'this chap Desmond, who has evidently got a dose of fever,' and after helping to get you in he drove off in his car. I'm certain he suspected nothing. It was only after he was gone when I came to put you to bed that I of course discovered you to be a wicked masquerader who has been having a joke at our expense all this time."

"A joke!" echoed Desmond with bitterness, and left it at that, returning to the subject of Lypiatt. "What made him bring me here?"

"He said he had called at the Oof-Bird and the Count, who was rather sick himself, told him you were lying delirious in your hut and suggested he should take you to the hospital. As he was on his way to Selukine, he brought you here instead of to the Wankelo hospital."

"Thank God!"

"Yes, fortunate, wasn't it! But—" Mrs. Hope broke off to gaze in astonishment, none the less vivid for being two days old, at the pale, tanned face on the pillow, the dark hair, no longer slicked down by unguents but tousled and curly, the brilliant derisive eyes. "But oh my dear, you can't mean to go on with it!"

"Can't I!" The words were less a question than a statement.

"Oh Desmond!—it seems ridiculous to think of how we've always called you 'young Desmond.'"

"It happens to be my name, though,



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and I never mean to use any other or to be any other person. Get that into your nice, precious noddle, Mrs. Hope."

"But my boy—my girl, I mean——" and at that they both burst out laughing. But Desmond's was not much more than a weak giggle and at the sound of it Mrs. Hope's laughter ceased suddenly and she became a nurse.

"You take a dose of this and shut your eyes and go to sleep for a few minutes while I get you some broth."

"Wait a moment—I want to beg you not to——"

"Not another word." Mrs. Hope was firm. "You shall talk as much as you like bye and bye. Now you *must* rest. But don't be worried. Your secret is absolutely safe with me, and no one else shall set foot in the room."

But of course the hour was bound to come for a heart to heart talk between patient and nurse, and each looked forward to it with different emotions. Mrs. Hope, though far from being strait-laced, was secretly horrified at the discovery of this young, beautiful and—she felt certain—high-born woman living disguised as a man under unconventional and unnatural conditions. She thought it unlikely enough that she would ever know the truth; but she meant to try to know enough to help, and to use every persuasion to get Desmond to return to her rightful identity.

Yet as the days passed and Desmond under careful nursing slowly improved, resolution faltered a little and changed in Mrs. Hope. The patient gave herself up to the business of getting well, but there was something so steadfast about her interest concerning the men and surroundings she had lived among that it was impossible not to recognize her intention to return to them as soon as she was able. Expostulation would be about as useful as throwing eggshells at a rock, Mrs. Hope decided, and in the end her intentions came to nothing more drastic than a daily séance on the patient's bed, reproachful glances in her kind eyes and adoring words on her lips. For, since she had fallen in love with Desmond as a boy on the ship, there was little difficulty in transferring her affections to the gay, tragic girl—woman who now began to bloom from her bed as radiantly as an orchid from a fever swamp.

"I spend far too much time here with you," Nurse Hope would say, settling herself comfortably. "There are Mrs. Bate's twins waiting to be bathed."

"Imps of Hades! they kept me awake an hour last night—let 'em wait. What news did Doctor Ryan bring from Wankelo today?"

For, as well as being a maternity home and haven for occasional fever patients, Mrs. Hope's hospital was the social center of the district, and by "straight or winding paths" whatsoever there was of news in the country came eventually to her sitting room.

In this way Desmond learned among other things that Lundi Druro ever since leaving the Oof-Bird had been on a hell-fire spree. No one quite knew where he stayed, but Wankelo saw him daily in various stages of his debauch, and in the general opinion he was making heavy weather of it and couldn't last long.

Desmond assimilated these things with beef tea and such other items of news as that Sherry had received a cable from England, summoning him to the deathbed of an aunt who meant to make him her heir; Pat de Vinton had got a kick from a mule that broke his thigh bone; the Count and Lypiatt having quarreled violently, their partnership was dissolved and the Count had sold all his belongings—except his grenadilla hut—and gone off to Cape Town on a prolonged bust; the Luffs had left the Bang-up and set up at Ga-tooma, where Eric was blossoming out into fresh adventures connected with the absorption of ponjola.

These items of news explained why some at least of Desmond's friends had not called to inquire; but even if they had come Mrs. Hope's strict injunctions were to let no one in. For illness had changed that "darn sight to cocky chap out at the Oof-Bird." The sun tan, which she had been obliged to assist liberally with stain, so persistent was the dazzling quality of her skin, had disappeared, giving place to pallor exquisitely tinted as a *Gloire* rose. The black stain was "growing off" her hair too, and round her temples a little quarter-inch frame of crisp red-gold made a unique setting to the subtly carved face.

"How could I ever have mistaken you for a man!" Mrs. Hope said for the *nth* time and for the *nth* time was answered:

"Of course you could, and you will again. What this large sized hand findeth to do, Mrs. Hope, it doeth well. You don't suppose I just assumed a man's clothes without prolonged and careful study, do you? It took many months, I assure you—months of rehearsal in a big studio, before mirrors; long consultations with unknown bootmakers and unfashionable tailors; weeks of stealthy sallying forth by night into the dim streets of a great city; gradual frequenting of theaters and cafés where the manners and gestures of young men could be studied; and at last cautious excursions in the daytime. As soon as I was certain of my gait and *ensemble* generally, I began to travel. One is safer on the move. Before people have time to notice one's idiosyncrasies one is gone. I practiced on Marseilles, Naples, Algiers and Constantinople, then perfected myself by a long trek into the Moroccan desert and another in Egypt. By the time I reached Port Said with the intention of seeing South Africa, I was perfectly at home in my rôle as well as in any kind of male kit. The only thing I have felt a little uncertain in is evening dress—so I always try to keep away from places where it is worn. Also, I don't feel secure in shirt sleeves and have had to put up with many a jeer because I don't take my coat off and get down to it." I dare say you will have noticed I make a specialty of loose fitting clothes—sport coats of rough tweed with plenty of pockets have been my great stand-by. There are certain curves of a woman's figure she can't get rid of but specially built and padded clothes can disguise them."

"You were never meant for such a life, child."

"Perhaps not; but I mean myself for it."

"You intend going on, then?" Mrs. Hope questioned mournfully.

"Why of course—forever."

The nurse shook her head.

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"It's impossible. You are bound to be caught out some day."

"Nonsense! Was Doctor James Barry caught out? There was a woman who died in the King's uniform after twenty years' service as an army surgeon, and without anyone ever having the faintest suspicion of her sex while she lived. And what about Vincent—otherwise Violet Lynch, the Irish 'soldier,' killed fighting with the French after seven years' service in the Franco-Prussian war? And Margaret Webb of the British Navy? and scores of well known and hundreds of lesser known cases where women have worked, traveled, fought, served before the mast, and more difficult still, lived quietly in small towns and villages disguised as men and never been found out. Some of them even married." Desmond smiled mischievously. "But I don't think I should go quite as far as that."

Mrs. Hope smiled too, then sighed.

"I tremble to think of some of the things you must have gone through," said the older woman, "and the things you must have heard and seen. As a nurse I know something of life and men, and I wonder how you've stood it."

"There have been awful moments, I admit," said Desmond slowly. "Of disgust, of detestation and sometimes of physical fear. To compensate for that, I may say I have never known a single second of boredom. The veldt wind has blown away a lot of things, and I am happier than I ever expected to be again."

"But my dear, it's all wrong. You, the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, simply made by nature not only to be a wife and mother but given brains as well so that you could fit any place in life and radiate out lovely influences. Believe me, these are the things you were sent into the world for—not to live this rough, dangerous life—" Her voice pleaded warmly, but a stern expression passed like a veil over the vivid face on the pillow.

"None of those things are for me."

In Desmond's deep, starry eyes two large tears formed slowly and fell down her face. She did not wipe them away, nor yet was the stern quality of her glance changed by them, but Nurse Hope got an impression of intense suffering beyond those two difficult tears, wrenched up from the deep.

"It is such waste . . . such sinful waste," sighed the older woman. Desmond after a while muttered slowly, as if to herself:

"Perhaps it may not be. Perhaps even on the veldt one could be of use to someone—a life not quite wasted."

She seemed so sunken in somber contemplation that Mrs. Hope decided that the best thing she could do was to slip unobtrusively away; but she did not stay long, for to have patients brooding over the past was no part of her régime. In a few minutes she was back, carrying something soft and bundly which she dumped down on to Desmond's lap.

"I thought you wouldn't mind holding one of Mrs. Bates's twins for a minute." She bustled briskly away.

If any instalment of "Ponjola" is more exciting than another, it is the one you will read in the November issue of COSMOPOLITAN. On sale at all news stands October tenth.



New Discovery Explains Why Hair Turns Gray

GRAY HAIR is simply hair without color! Science has discovered that if a certain natural process in the root were not affected by worry or by advancing age, the hair would never become gray, but retain its natural color throughout life.

A remarkable new discovery now makes it possible for the original color of the hair to be restored quickly and easily through a simple, natural process. Hair acquires its color (blonde, black, brown, auburn, etc.) from the presence of coloring matter or pigment in tiny cells found at the root of the hair. This coloring matter is given off at the tip of the papilla, enters the root and is dissolved in tiny corpuscles in the middle layer of the hair. The process is known as pigmentation.

As soon as this process is affected by advancing age, or by shock, worry or illness the pigment supply lessens or fails—and no coloring is sent up into the hair. The result is that the hair becomes streaked with gray. This gray does not indicate a change in color. It indicates an absence of color. The hair has simply blanched.

How New Discovery Restores Natural Color

Tru-Tone, the marvelous new scientific discovery, quickly restores the true, original color to gray hair—to hair that has blanched. It is not an ordinary dye, or stain, or tint. It is pleasant and simple to use—none of the muss and trouble of ordinary color restorers. It makes no difference whether your hair was black, brown, blonde, or auburn—Tru-Tone works equally well, making your hair appear the same as it was before it had even a trace of gray in it. It makes no difference

how gray your hair is—Tru-Tone will restore it, and no one need know you are banishing your gray hair if you don't want them to.

Wonderful for Thin Falling Hair

It was only after extensive research and experiment that Tru-Tone was discovered. It is just a clear, pure liquid—almost colorless, containing tonic properties that stimulate the natural growth of the hair. Tru-Tone, therefore, not only restores the natural color to your hair, but makes it thick, glossy and beautiful at the same time. You can use it with absolute confidence, knowing that it cannot possibly discolor the hair or harm it in any way.

If you will fill in the coupon and mail it to us at once, we will send you a full-size bottle of Tru-Tone in plain sealed package—no marking to indicate the contents.

ONLY \$1.45

When the postman delivers Tru-Tone to your door, give him only \$1.45 (plus postage), in full payment. This is a special introductory price—Tru-Tone ordinarily sells for \$3.00. If, after a fair test of Tru-Tone, you are not delighted with results, if Tru-Tone does not restore your hair to its original color, simply return what is left of it and your money will be refunded at once.

Clip the coupon and mail it now, before you forget. Bear in mind that the test of Tru-Tone need cost nothing if you are not absolutely delighted. Act NOW. A postcard will do, if you prefer it. DOMINO HOUSE, Dept. T-6510, 269 South Ninth Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

DOMINO HOUSE, Dept. T-6510
269 South 9th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
You may send me a \$3.00 bottle of your Tru-Tone. I will pay the postman only \$1.45 plus postage. Although I am benefiting by the special introductory cut price, I am purchasing the first bottle with the absolute guaranteed privilege of returning it after a fair trial and you agree to refund my money if I am not delighted with the results in every way. I am to be the sole judge.

Name
Address
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If you wish you may send money with coupon.
(Price outside U. S. \$1.60, cash with order.)

Our \$10,000 Guarantee Producers and Consumers Bank Philadelphia, Pa.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The proprietor of Domino House has protected this Bank in the sum of \$10,000, so that we may in turn guarantee to the customers of Domino House that this firm will do exactly as they agree.

If they fail to do so, this Bank hereby agrees to return to the customers of Domino House the total amount of their purchases from them, said amount at no time to exceed in the aggregate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars.

Yours very truly,

By [Signature]

ASST. TREASURER

Danderine

35-cent Bottle Stops Falling
Hair—Ends Dandruff
Delightful Tonic



Hurry! It's your duty! Each day you see a little more hair falling out and you are making no effort to avoid baldness. What a pity. Falling hair means your hair is weak, sick, possibly dandruff is strangling it, or the hair-root pores in the scalp are not firm and tight, thus wasting the hair-growing oils.

Danderine almost instantly stops falling hair of men or women and cleans every particle of dandruff away, then the hair takes on new life, vigor and strength to grow strong, thick, and long.

Danderine is delightful—not sticky or greasy. Go to any drugstore now and get a bottle. Use it. Have healthy, heavy, beautiful hair and lots of it.



Since 1860
the one best glycerine soap!

THE bath room or wash room which contains a cake of No. 4711 White Rose Glycerine Soap is made luxurious by that one touch alone! Such a delightful sensation of mildness in its use! Such a faint, agreeable perfume and richness of creamy, purifying lather! Take a cake home to-day, or a box. Your favorite shop has it.

No. 4711 White Rose Glycerine Soap

Enjoy Also!

No. 4711 Eau de Cologne—the genuine old-fashioned Cologne water, made the same since 1792—and

No. 4711 Bath Salts—which come in seven exquisite perfumes. Nothing like these Salts for softening the water and exhilarating the bather!

MULHENS & KROPFF, Inc.

25 W. 45th St. New York
Made in U. S. A.

The Wages of Cinema

(Continued from page 73)

Malachi Martin's antics for the next couple of weeks would be more than enough evidence to break his last will and testament and that's a fact! I have met people in my travels which liked to go to movin' picture shows, but this here Malachi didn't like to go nowhere else! In fourteen days Malachi must of been the given point for about 30,000 miles of film to pass. The wife proves a gourmand for punishment and went along with Malachi till he commences boundin' wildly about Gotham to see Mirthless Comedies over and over again. Then she claims exemption.

All this time Malachi don't crack a thing regardin' the secret business he was goin' into in Manhattan or the mysterious girl without no name which he had galloped all the way from Yaggy, Kansas, to wed. Nearly every night my ravishin' helpmeet brings over a different one of her delicious girl friends in a praiseworthy effort to get Malachi to quit clownin', act like a human bein' and make one of them knockouts his own. No can do! In the mean's while, I'm workin' like a Chinese coolie tryin' to get Malachi to invest a piece of his twenty-five grand in my stable of box-fightin' fools. No chance there, either.

So I'm all set to cancel Malachi one day when he calls me up and wants to know can he bring a friend home to dinner. He also adds that he's just gone into the business he come to New York to dally with and when he comes up he'll tell all.

Well, curiosity killed the cat so I tell him all right bring his friend with him and try to pick one which is a vegetarian, as steaks run into money.

Six o'clock and Malachi arrives together at our Riverside's Drive love nest and as the wife is dressin' to knock cousin Malachi's guest for a triple, I answered the bell. I throwed open the door with a flourish and then stepped back with a gasp. Malachi's got a girl with him which would distract attention from a lynchin' in Times Square durin' the theater hour. Oh, this one's a wow—a tall, curvin', baby-eyed brunette panic, if they ever was one! Malachi sees my consternation and grins.

"Miss Montgomery," he says, "shake hands with my cousin." Then, turnin' to me, "Cousin, meet Yvette Montgomery, formerly with Mirthless Comedies—you've prob'ly saw her a million times on the screen."

"Sure!" I says. As the matter and fact I never seen her or never heard tell of her before in my life. "Glad to know you, Miss Montgomery. Eh—so you ain't in the picture game any more, eh?"

"Well—I—" lisps this laudanum addict's dream, with a swift glance at Malachi, "I—"

"Suppose we go inside?" butts in Malachi.

Bein' a knockout herself, the wife ain't particularly throwed off her game by the appearance of Malachi's girl friend. In a few minutes we sit down to dinner and I am busy castin' about in my mind for a way of gettin' Malachi to tell what's this business he's went into and where does Miss Yvette Montgomery fit, if at all, when with one innocent remark the wifes spills the beans! "I've seen quite a lot of you, Miss Montgomery, with my cousin Malachi,"

she says. "He's quite a fan. And you're not with Mirthless Comedies any more?"

Miss Montgomery shakes her pretty head, toyin' with the salad. Malachi coughs.

"She's just signed a contract with Malachi Martin Super-Productions, Incorporated!" he remarks. "Pass the butter, please, cousin."

Blam!

Malachi Martin Super-Productions! The wife's mouth pops open and she passes Malachi the table fern instead of the butter. I sit lookin' at him kind of dazed, not knowin' that I'm puttin' English mustard in my coffee.

"You—you have gone into the movin' picture business, Malachi?" gasps the wife.

"That's what I come to New York for!" grins Malachi, pilin' his plate high again.

"But you got no experience in the movie game, you big—eh—Malachi!" I busts out, thinkin' of the twenty-five grand which I'm now practically gypped out of.

"What's that got to do with it?" says Malachi Martin Super-Productions, Inc. "I bet I'll have plenty experience before I get through!"

"There's a bet you can't help winnin'!" I says, with a sneer. "In a few weeks all you will have is experience. Wait till they hear about this out in dear old Yaggy—the cows and chickens will get the hystericals!"

Miss Yvette Montgomery looks bothered and the wife comes to the rescue.

"Don't mind him!" she says. "Why shouldn't Malachi make a success? We've never had a loser in our family!"

"Well, don't cry," I says. "Malachi's set to smash that record to smithereens! Would you mind tellin' me the names of the Griffiths and Laskys which is associated with you in this frolic, Malachi? I'll have 'em looked up tomorrow by a friend of mine which knows Will Hays from the postage stamp game. I'll give you a report on 'em right away."

"Thanks," says Malachi. "Sure is mighty neighborly of you!" He hands me over a slip of paper which says, "Malachi Martin Super-Productions, Inc. Malachi Martin, President; Eddie Himmel, Secretary; Shorty Eisenberg, Treasurer." I bust out laughin' and explain I have just thought of somethin' funny. I have. Can you picture a business letterhead with the officers called "Eddie" and "Shorty"? Hot towel!

Well, Malachi carefully steers all talk off the movin' picture industry and about eleven o'clock he leaves to take Miss Yvette Montgomery home. Before they go he signals me to duck out into the hall.

"Listen!" he whispers. "Don't say nothin' to Miss Montgomery about—eh—about me bein' a plumber, will you? I—I—didn't think that sounded so good, so I told her I was a rich barber."

Laugh that off!

After Malachi exits with Yvette, me and the wife sit down to talk matters over and see if we can't dope some way to save him from the clutches of the beautiful gold digger.

Personally, I know just what has occurred to Malachi as well as if I'd of been with him when he runs amuck and incorporates. The latest and most popular outdoor sport along Gyp Avenue, viz

Broadway, is puttin' rich saps into the well known movies as producers. The cash turnover in this line from day to day is only exceeded by one legitimate business and that's bootleggin'. From two to five in the afternoon along the roarin' Forties, incorporations flows like water! About one percent of these independent producers actually releases good pictures at a profit. The other ninety-nine percent could of taken Captain Kidd for his cutlass and made him like it! Once the wealthy sapolio signs his name on the dotted line, the rest is a shoo-in for the stick-ups.

Thinkin' matters over all night, the next mornin' I am convinced that cousin Malachi has fell into the hands of this kind of a mob. Convinchin' Malachi is different! He's all hopped up over his picture company and double cuckoo over Yvette Montgomery, his nice new star. He even offers to sell me five shares of stock in the firm for five thousand dollars, just to be "neighborly." He says it's a sacrifice.

"It might be a sacrifice in Yaggy, Malachi," I snorts. "But where I come from it would go for a triple! In the first place, nobody in the wide world ever heard of your leadin' woman but you and her parents. Why don't you hire some well known stars to support her—like Mary Pickford, Rodolph Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks and Harold Lloyd?"

"That ain't a bad idea at that!" says Malachi seriously. "And it's mighty neighborly of you to suggest it. Of course, after a few pictures, Miss Montgomery will be better known than any of them people, but right now it might help to have some of 'em with us. What salary d'ye suppose they'd want?"

I tell you I ain't never been able to know whether this baby is kiddin' me or not. If he can keep his character as straight as his face, the movie's gain was the ministry's loss, no foolin'!

"Fairbanks and Valentino knock off around five thousand a week, not countin' tips, Malachi," I says.

"Don't you believe it!" says Malachi. "That's just newspaper talk. None of them actors gets the salary it says in the papers they get—that's somethin' I know!"

"Where did you eavesdrop that tidbit?" I asks, thoroughly enjoyin' myself.

"Why, a actor told me himself!" says Malachi. "I had a bill against one once of eighty-seven dollars, and accordin' to the papers this fellow gets three hundred dollars a week. Well, when I went to collect my bill he confessed to me that his *real* salary was only eighteen dollars!"

"Of course you believed him," I says.

"Of course," says Malachi.

And I let this guy's twenty-five grand get away from me!

"Well, Malachi," I says, "if that's the case, these big stars which is supposed to get five thousand a week and actually gets eighteen and twenty-five dollars would prob'ly jump at a job with some *real* money in it. How high could you go if you could get, say, Fairbanks or Valentino to support this Yvette Montgomery?"

"About two hundred a week," says Malachi. "And they'd get it every Saturday night, rain or shine!"

I took a piece of paper off the writin' desk and composed the followin' for Malachi to wire Valentino, Fairbanks, Lloyd and any others of equal prominence he might select:



TO those who would avoid the commonplace in wedding gifts we suggest a Whiting & Davis Mesh Bag. Both its beauty and its style correctness set it apart from the conventional. Truly, a Whiting & Davis Mesh Bag is the gift unusual.

WHITING & DAVIS CO.
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The "Safeguard"
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Whiting & Davis MESH BAGS

In the Better Grades. Made of the Famous "Whiting" Soldered Mesh

Eyes that are
Shadowed by
Dark Satiny Lashes



PRISCILLA DEAN
FASCINATING
UNIVERSAL STAR

—are full of mystery and charm. You can have lovely eyes; their beauty depends on the long dusky lashes that surround them. Use LIQUID LASHLUX to bead your lashes and make them appear longer and darker. Applied with the glass rod attached to the stopper of the bottle, it dries instantly and it lasts. Waterproof and harmless, it is unaffected by swimming, perspiration or even weeping at the theatre.

To nourish the lashes and promote their growth, use Colorless Cream Lashlux at night. Black or Brown Cream Lashlux only slightly darkens the lashes and brows, at the same time nourishing them.

LIQUID LASHLUX (black or brown) 75c. CREAM LASHLUX (black, brown or colorless) 50c. At drug, department stores or direct by mail.

Send a dime today for a generous sample of Liquid Lashlux.

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LIQUID LASHLUX
means luxuriant lashes



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Choice of Mahogany or Walnut. Full length mirror. Other pieces of suite to match. This Dresser and 1200 other attractive furnishings all offered on easy-monthly payments. Ask today for our latest, big FREE, 104 page Larkin Book of Better Homes. A real guide as thousands of home-lovers testify. Check below offer interested in.

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Stops Pain Instantly

The simplest way to end a corn is Blue-jay. A touch stops the pain instantly. Then the corn loosens and comes out. Made in two forms—a colorless, clear liquid (one drop does it!) and in extra thin plasters. Use whichever form you prefer, plasters or the liquid—the action is the same. Safe, gentle. Made in a world-famed laboratory. Sold by all druggists.

FREE: Write Bauer & Black, Chicago, Dept. 7, for valuable book, "Correct Care of the Feet."

Offer you two hundred and fifty a week to support Yvette Montgomery. Steady job, no Sunday work. Pay every Saturday night. Would think it mighty neighborly if you'd wire answer, your expense.

Malachi Martin Super-Productions, Inc.

Malachi Martin
Eddie Himmel
Shorty Eisenberg

And for all I know, he sent it.

The next time I see the Yaggy movie magnate he says everything's comin' along fine and he's to get ten percent of the gross receipts of each picture.

"By the way," he says, "we bought our first story today. It's called 'Nicholas Nickleby' and we got it from the author for five thousand cash!"

"Merciful Heavens, what a pushin' around these gyps is givin' you!" I hollers. "Your brains is continually out of location. Charley Dickens wrote 'Nicholas Nickleby' and Charley Dickens is dead, you cuckoo!"

"Not so fast!" says Malachi, unmoved. "I raised the mischief too at first, but come to find out, Dickens's father called round to the office and the money was paid to him!"

Whilst I'm chokin' over that one, Malachi shows me the salary list. Everybody but Yvette Montgomery is gettin' five hundred a week. Yvette's gettin' a thousand. Malachi says they're in the market for a good title writer. The first title writer they hired at five hundred a week went cuckoo after actually gettin' his first week's salary, wrote "That Night" a couple of hundred times and fled.

But Malachi, the man of a thousand surprises, pulls the real darb one day about three weeks after he's been payin' off the bandits. This one's the sparrow's chirp, no foolin'. He blows in one night and knocks me and my bride for a row of Manchurian pie plates by calmly announcin' that he's now a full fledged movie star himself!

"Be yourself!" I howls. "If you're a actor, I'm a Siamese duke!"

"No foolin'," says Malachi. "We can't get nobody to properly support Miss Montgomery and Valentino and them fellows never answered my wire. So the director tried me out today, and honest I must of been born a actor! They think I'm great and besides my percentage I'm to get a hundred a week salary to start."

"Out of your own bankroll, if they's any left!" I says.

"Well, of course, if you want to look at it that way!" says Malachi, struttin' around the room. "Just think of havin' a movie star in the family! The director says I'm almost a double for Wallace Reid."

"If Wallace Reid ever hears that he'll kill you and the director!" I says.

The next day I go out to the studio to see Malachi Martin and his super-productions company doin' their stuff. Say, them bozos would of made a mummy cackle its head off! Things looks more like the dream of a rarebit fiend than anything else. Nobody knows what it's all about and they're all rushin' back and forth tryin' to look busy, till the carpenters and electricians laughs themselves on the brinks of hysterics. I didn't know they was any bathin' girls in "Nicholas Nickleby," but they's some in the movie of it that Malachi Martin's Super-Productions Company is tearin' off, don't think they ain't. Yvette Montgomery is the chief beach beauty. Everything's in this drama but the kitchen sink!

Well, all things, except the fool crop, has to come to a end and at last the picture is finished. It's about 164 miles long and has to be cut to five reels before it can be showed to the releasin' companies and it's turned down flat before two reels has been run off by all but one of 'em. That one turns it down after seein' one reel.

Then Malachi calls it a day!

He comes up to the flat with a can of film under each arm and such a woebegone look on his pan that I only tell him "I told you so!" three or four times. I'm noted far and wide for bein' soft-hearted, so I call up a pal of mine who's hep to the movie game and make a date with him for right away to look at Malachi Martin's super-production and see if anything can be saved from the wreck. At the end of a hour and a half's punishment in the projection room, my boy friend turns to Malachi and speaks thus:

"Friend, 'at's a terrible thing, 'at picture! However, the market is short of comedies right now and if 'at mess was cut down to two reels and titled by a good, wise-crackin' title writer, I think I could peddle it for you. It'll cost you about five hundred bucks to patch it up, but it'll be worth it."

"Thank you kindly," says Malachi, stirrin' out of his daze. "But this ain't no comedy, it's a drama, and here and there they's some good actin' in it, no matter what the releasers says! Take 'at scene where I jump off the bridge after Miss Montgomery and——"

I think I know what's the matter.

"Malachi," I butts in, "I'll loan you the five hundred to have this alleged movie fixed up. You go back to Yaggy and continue on repairin' steam pipes, and if it ever makes a nickel I'll see that you get it."

"Sure is mighty neighborly of you," says Malachi, "but I don't want nothin' done with this picture! I don't want everybody in the world seein' what a fool I made out of myself. I'm goin' to keep this picture to show to my children, if I ever have any. If any of 'em ever wants to go into the movies I'll have this film run off for 'em somewheres and they can see what the movies done to their father! And, cousin, I don't never have to repair no more steam pipes, as far as that goes. Come up to my office—I got a surprise for you!"

When we got up there we had a surprise field day!

First, there's Yvette Montgomery waitin'. She looks at Malachi with the cans of film under his arm, then she blushes and turns away. I got no sympathy for her.

"This guy blowed twenty-five thousand bucks on you, Cutey," I says. "Now he's broke. You made him what he is today, I hope your satisfied!"

Yvette quails me with a glance. She takes a little piece of pink paper out of her handbag and hands it to Malachi, who looks at it and then drops the cans of movin' picture on the floor.

A certified check for six thousand three hundred dollars made out to me! What does this mean?" he gasps.

"It means that I couldn't go through with it," says Yvette, a bit wearily. "I couldn't take your money like those other crooks did, that's all! You paid me a thousand a week for seven weeks and I took a hundred for myself and put the rest in the bank each week. That's the rest—that sixty-three hundred. I never was a

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famous leading woman, as you were led to believe. I—I was only a bathing girl!" "I know it," says Malachi, never takin' his hungry eyes off her face. "I knew it all the time."

"Then—then why—" stammers Yvette. She and Malachi exchange looks, with Malachi gettin' the decision as she lowers her eyes.

"I never was a actor, either!" he says. "What are you?" asks Yvette, like she really wants to know.

"A plumber," I butts in, "and a darned good one, too!"

"A plumbin' contractor, cousin," Malachi corrects me. "A plumbin' contractor till a few months ago, when some land I bought in Oklahoma turned out to be jammed with oil. Funny thing—five years ago when I bought it I thought I was a fool. Now—well, that twenty-five thousand I put in this picture I'll get back with my royalty check this month. I figure it was worth it to meet you, Yvette, because I ain't been able to get proper sleep since the first time I seen you last year in Yaggy, Kansas!"

"Why, I've never been there in my life, Malachi!" says Yvette, and I'm the only one which notices she calls him by his first name.

"Oh yes you was!" says Malachi. "On the screen! You was a bathin' girl in a Mirthless Comedy. I seen that particular picture twenty times and I've seen a couple million Mirthless Comedies since, tryin' to see you again. I wanted you worse than I ever wanted anything in all my life and when the oil money began to come in I made up my mind I'd find you! I learned that them Mirthless Comedies was made in New York, so I come on here. The minute I got your address I was goin' to rush right up and ask you to marry me, but I figured a girl like you must get plenty of them kind of fools chasin' after her. Then I thought if I started a company and made a star out of you, my chances would be—well—eh—better that way than any other. Well, that's what I done. I'm sorry the picture was no good. You don't have to tell me, Yvette, that I've ruined whatever chances I might of had by showin' you just what a fool I am!"

They's a dead silence, broke only by my heavy breathin'. I'm thinkin' of this oil millionaire in my family! What Yvette's thinkin' I don't know but she walks over and lays her hand on Malachi's arm.

"You did all this—spent all that money—stood all that abuse from those cheap little crooks to—to marry me?" she says.

Malachi kicks a innocent waste basket.

"Just do me one favor, Yvette," he says. "Don't rub it in! I—I suppose—I suppose you hate me, don't you?"

I glance at Yvette and I see something!

"You big stiff!" I hollers at Malachi.

"Would she of brung you back that sixty-three hundred fish if she hated you? What d'ye want the girl to do—kidnap you? Go on, stupid, do your stuff!"

"Will you—will you marry me, Yvette?" he busts out, wild-eyed.

"Yes, Malachi, I will!" murmurs Yvette.

"Eh—eh—thank you kindly," says Malachi, a bit dazed. "Eh—sure is mighty neighborly of you!"

Sure was!

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His Children's Children

(Continued from page 45)

His eye ran along the tables appraisingly—perhaps the unknown She might even now be lunching there. He hardly listened to what Messrs. Steiner and Savoy were saying. Already the door stood halfway open into an enchanted and joyous land of gay abandonment. His chance to slip gracefully in came even more quickly than he had dared to hope. Two tables away a girl whose profile had all along attracted him turned and threw a smile of recognition in their direction.

"I wondered if she'd notice us," remarked Steiner.

"Nothing gets by little Mercedes!" answered Savoy. "That reminds me——"

He jotted something on the back of a menu and handed it to a waiter to take to her. Miss Mercedes received and read it. Then borrowing the waiter's pencil, she scribbled:

"Am I coming? Sure! With bells on! M."

Savoy blew her a kiss.

"I'm having a little party Sunday night and I hadn't heard from you proud beauty. I've asked Larry Devereaux and Dick Darcy and one or two others. Care to come? Glad to have you, if you've nothing more interesting on."

Rufus tried to be equally casual as he replied that he'd like to come if he hadn't anything on—he'd ask his secretary.

CHAPTER XV

A REAL PARTY

RUFUS, as might have been foreseen, managed to adjust his engagements so that he was able to attend Mr. Savoy's party the following Sunday night. This was not difficult, for Elizabeth was going to the Jameses, who were having an affair of their own, the attraction being a colored missionary from Mozambique. Rufus had balked at the color line—an excellent excuse.

Mr. Savoy's apartment proved to be over a famous restaurant, but it was none the less elegant for that, and the convenient juxtaposition enabled its owner to entertain easily and promiscuously. The beautiful women and brave men were all there when Rufus arrived and he regretted that he had not realized the informal character of the gathering and worn a dinner jacket like the other men instead of a dress suit. He stood stiffly in the doorway looking for his host, very much in the way, as fluttered as a girl at her first dance.

The effusiveness of the greetings, the backslapping, the "hello dearies" and the inevitable suffix of "sweetheart" and "darling," the way they all patted and pawed and hung on to one another, embarrassed Rufus. What would the Jameses think if they could see him there! Then his eye caught the profile of a well known member of the judiciary and he brightened. Simultaneously a hand clapped his shoulder.

"Honored!" said Mr. Savoy. "Let's duck this riffraff and get hold of some real people. Of course I have to ask everybody. Anyone you want particularly to meet?"

Rufus took courage at this recognition of his own paramount standing. Mr. Savoy led him along until they reached a

small smoking room or den where a select company were sitting—among them the pretty girl Rufus had noticed at the Elysée. Rufus was introduced to the members of the party and presently found himself talking to Mercedes.

He was struck at once by her extreme youth—nineteen, she admitted, with a childish laugh at his surprise. Only a year older than Sheila! Nineteen was really quite old, she told him. She had been on the stage since she was ten. But it flattered him to believe that her slightly deferential—almost respectful—manner was not due entirely to his age. In the quiet intimacy of their retirement he regained all his usual confidence and did his best to make himself agreeable without being paternal.

After all there was nothing out of the way in what he was doing. It merely showed him to be alive. Miss Delaval—for such was her surname—struck him as unusually intelligent and even more attractive than his recollection of her. He had assumed that she was professional, but his unfamiliarity with the gayer life of the city had prevented his recognition of her identity. Had this not been so he would have been more upon his guard; but as it was, he took her very nearly at her face value—which was certainly high.

He had never talked to an actress before, although he found it hard to believe that she was an actress and a show girl at that. Almost diffident, she had something elusively provocative and alluring about her that made Rufus want to climb over the wall of her reserve and see for himself what there was behind it.

He could attract when he chose and she let him see that she was complimented by his interest. She was so natural, earnest and trustful—and he so ready to be trusted—that they were soon talking with entire informality; and she knew just when to place her hand impulsively upon his knee—the others had gone out—and let him enclose it for a moment in his. She was so young, her limbs so slender, her skin so softly warm, her eyes so guileless, the little chuckle of her laugh so contagious! A wonder child! And like a child she talked.

Part of what he learned surprised and interested him. What she really liked most, she said, was books—history, poetry—a good novel once in a while for variety—music, real music such as was provided by the concerts at Carnegie Hall—and nature, the open country, the seashore.

Rufus, only half convinced but eager to be convinced, assured himself that here was a sweet girl who had never had a chance. The trouble with her life, she said with a pathetic droop of her shoulders, was that she knew so few decent men.

Rufus, bewildered by her apparent ingenuousness, wondered if such innocence were possible in view of her associations. He could hardly believe it; yet looking at her demure little face and listening to her artless chatter he wanted to believe that the miracle was true.

When she said that she must go home he held her hand a long time. He would have kissed it had he known how to do so with the proper air. And Mercedes with a pathetic look thanked him gratefully

for being so nice to her. He made no reference to a possible continuation of their acquaintance; and neither did she—an exhibition of good taste which pleased him. No use being in a hurry! He had made a good start.

The colored missionary from Mozambique had long since ceased his exhortation to the Jameses two hundred golden friends ranged in the two hundred golden chairs—kept down in the basement when not in use—but a perforated roll still hung dejectedly by one spindle from the mechanical organ on the upper landing. Rufus thanked his stars he hadn't been there!

CHATER XVI

CLAUDIA'S ESCAPE

CLAUDIA, Lady Harrowdale, stood at the library window of "The Bandbox," her country house in Surrey, smoking a cigarette and watching young Hawker sauntering towards the clump of firs at the foot of the garden. Mr. Hawker had walked over from Folly House for luncheon and to make—for the thirteenth time—the kindly suggestion that she should, with his assistance, give her lord and master a taste of his own medicine.

Hawker seemed a well meaning lad—slightly corrupted perhaps by the general social demoralization of the post-war period, but who wasn't?—and he took no pains to conceal the fact that he liked Claudia very much and hated to see her so neglected. But in spite of her gratitude for his affection and companionship she had today given him quite plainly to understand that he must not come again. As his broad back in its well cut Norfolk jacket disappeared among the tree trunks she felt like a marooned sailor who sees the ship that has abandoned him on his island vanish over the horizon. Leaning her forehead against the cool pane and staring out into the drizzle, it seemed to her as if she had done nothing else—except to bring little Peter and Bess into the world—for nearly four years; nothing but that, and quarrel with Harrowdale when he deigned to put in an appearance, which was seldom now.

Claudia could not understand why the neighbors in some paradoxical way seemed to hold her responsible for his desertion. In England, apparently, it was not respectable to be deserted by one's husband.

During the four years in which she had lived in the Bandbox she had aged fifteen. She had left America a gay, triumphant "war bride" looking forward to a life of active, colorful service in her husband's country—and had instead found herself married to a slacker and a rake. She had borne his infidelities as long as she could and then had taken the advice of counsel who had informed her that, since she lacked evidence of legal cruelty—although his adultery was open and unabashed—she could not win her freedom under English law.

Harrowdale, who watched all her movements, derided her. So she had tried to have the law upon him, had she? Well, two could work that game! She had better not try to play him any trick! Five days later she had received a letter from his

How to Shampoo Your Hair Properly

*How You Can Make
Your Hair Beautiful—
Keep It Soft and Silky,
Bright, Fresh-Looking
and Luxuriant*

THE beauty of your hair depends upon the care you give it. Shampooing it properly is always the most important thing.

It is the shampooing which brings out the real life and lustre, natural wave and color, and makes your hair soft, fresh and luxuriant.

When your hair is dry, dull and heavy, lifeless, stiff and gummy, and the strands cling together, and it feels harsh and disagreeable to the touch, it is because your hair has not been shampooed properly.

When your hair has been shampooed properly, and is thoroughly clean, it will be glossy, smooth and bright, delightfully fresh-looking, soft and silky.

While your hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soaps. The free alkali in ordinary soap soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

That is why discriminating women, everywhere, now use Mulsified coconut oil shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product cannot possibly injure, and it does not dry the scalp or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it.

If you want to see how really beautiful and attractive you can make your hair look, just follow this simple method:

A Simple, Easy Method

FIRST, put two or three teaspoonfuls of Mulsified in a cup or glass with a little warm water. Then wet the hair and scalp with clear warm water. Pour the Mulsified evenly over the hair and rub it thoroughly all over the scalp and throughout the entire length, down to the ends of the hair.

Two or three teaspoonfuls will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather. This should be rubbed in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips, so as to loosen the dandruff and small particles of dust and dirt that stick to the scalp.

After rubbing in the rich, creamy Mulsified lather, rinse the hair and scalp thoroughly—



Use plenty of lather. Rub it in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips.



The final rinsing should leave the hair soft and silky in the water.



When thoroughly clean, wet hair fairly squeaks when you pull it through your fingers—and feels light and fluffy to the touch.

always using clear, fresh warm water.

Then use another application of Mulsified again working up a lather and rubbing it in briskly as before.

Two waters are usually sufficient for washing the hair, but sometimes the third is necessary.

You can easily tell, for when the hair is perfectly clean, it will be soft and silky in the water, the strands will fall apart easily, each separate hair floating alone in the water, and the entire mass, even while wet, will feel loose, fluffy and light to the touch and be so clean it will fairly squeak when you pull it through your fingers.

Rinse the Hair Thoroughly

THIS is very important. After the final washing, the hair and scalp should be rinsed in at least two changes of good warm water and followed with a rinsing in cold water.

After a Mulsified shampoo you will find the hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being thicker and heavier than it is.

If you want to always be remembered for your beautiful, well-kept hair, make it a rule to set a certain day each week for a Mulsified coconut oil shampoo. This regular weekly shampooing will keep the scalp soft and the hair fine and silky, bright, fresh-looking and fluffy, wavy and easy to manage—and it will be noticed and admired by everyone.

You can get Mulsified at any drug store or toilet goods counter, anywhere in the world. A 4-ounce bottle should last for months.

Keeping A Child's Hair Beautiful

CHILDREN should be taught, early in life, that proper care of the hair is essential.

The hair and scalp should be kept perfectly clean to insure a healthy, vigorous scalp and a

fine, thick, heavy head of hair.

Get your children into the habit of shampooing their hair regularly once a week. Put two or three teaspoonfuls of Mulsified in a cup or glass with a little warm water. Then wet the hair and scalp with clear warm water. Pour the Mulsified over the hair and rub it in vigorously with the tips of the fingers. This will stimulate the scalp, make an abundance of rich, creamy lather and cleanse the hair thoroughly. It takes only a few seconds to rinse it all out when through.

You will be surprised how this regular weekly shampooing with Mulsified will improve the appearance of the hair and you will be teaching your child a habit that will be appreciated in after-life, for a luxurious head of hair is some thing every man and woman feels mighty proud of.

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solicitors stating that her children had become wards in Chancery and that any attempt on her part to take them out of the country or interfere with them without the permission of the Lord Chancellor would be a contempt of court punishable by indefinite imprisonment. A little American mouse in an English legal rat trap!

Harrowdale, swaggering, had challenged her to defy the Chancery—unless her father was willing to talk business. He did not like the idea of his children becoming Americans, but he had no money and—well she might write to her father and suggest some sort of a *quid pro quo*. Small wonder that her dark brown hair had lost its luster, that her face, once full of charming contours, had grown peaked, and that the moth-wing bloom on her dusky cheeks had vanished. Small wonder that in spite of little Peter, who was enthusiastically pushing a woolly bear on wheels along the hearthrug, she saw young Hawker's figure vanish with a tinge of regret. Why, as he had said, should not what was sauce for the gander be sauce for the goose as well?

It might have been had not Ventnor, the butler who, although paid by her, was a spy of her husband's, informed her at that moment that a gentleman was calling on Lady Harrowdale, and handed her the card of Captain Nigel Craig.

Nigel happened to be staying nearby, he explained, and as he had had the pleasure of meeting her sister in New York, had taken the liberty of dropping in to see her. Claudia was delighted. Seen close to, the visitor's eyes were even more beautiful than from across the room. Then Ventnor, having silently departed, Nigel told her why he had come and showed her her father's letter. The girl's breath quickened, and the color mounted to her drab cheeks and the tears to her eyes.

"We mustn't talk here," Nigel whispered. "I've a closed car at the inn garage. We can talk in that. My chauffeur is perfectly safe. We've got to act quickly. Can you meet me in twenty minutes, say, on the road through the woods to Denby?"

"In ten," she answered; "I'll be walking on the right-hand side."

She rang for Ventnor and when he came she said with a real thrill at playing a part:

"I'm sorry, Captain Craig, that I can't afford to give you a subscription. I'm sure it's a very noble work."

They shook hands punctiliously and Ventnor showed the visitor out. Five minutes later Claudia, her knitted shopping bag on her arm, started for the village. From his second story window young Hawker watched her through a spyglass until she turned into the Denby road. Then he reached for a cigarette. "She can't stand it forever," he muttered. "She'll cave sooner or later!"

Claudia walked slowly through the woods and soon heard behind her the muffled cough of a horn. A limousine passed her, stopped, and Nigel leaped out.

"Much better!" he declared as together they took their seats inside. "Now we can talk all we want."

In the broad light that fell through the plate glass windows of the car Claudia marveled at the sweetness of his smile and the play of color under his brown skin—a complexion that any woman might have envied.

He had been in London a month, he

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for
"The Last Word"



DEFINITION

The practice of Chiropractic consists of the adjustment, with the hands, of the movable segments of the spinal column to normal position for the purpose of releasing the prisoned impulse

DOES the liver make bile? Does the stomach digest the food?

Does the ear hear, the eye see, the nose smell, the mouth taste and the hand feel?

A corpse has eyes, ears, nose, mouth and hands, yet these organs of special sense do not function.

A corpse has a liver and a stomach, yet there is no secretion of bile—no digestion of food. Why?

Is it not a self-evident proposition that it is because the power that manifests itself through the body, soul and mind of man has departed?

Just as the butter maker makes butter in the churn, or as the housewife makes coffee in the pot, so this "power within" sees with the eye, hears with the ear, makes bile in the liver, digests food in the stomach and performs all the other functions of the living.

CHIROPRACTIC

teaches that these functions are performed by means of impulses sent over the nerves, and that when the nerve is impinged by a subluxated vertebra these impulses cannot travel over the nerve and we have a lack of normal function, called disease.

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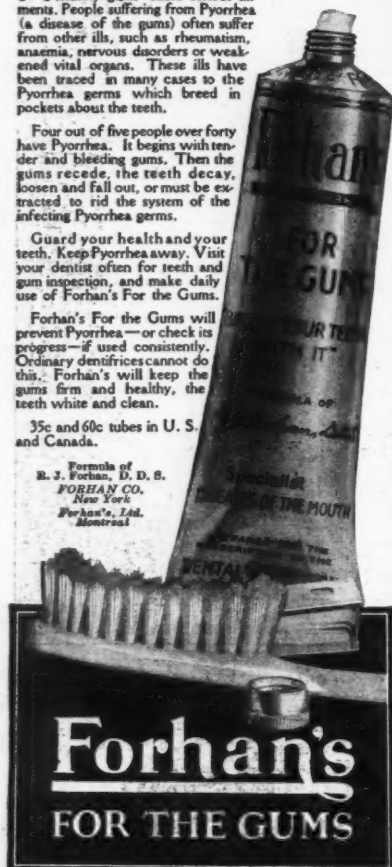
Four out of five people over forty have Pycorrhoea. It begins with tender and bleeding gums. Then the gums recede, the teeth decay, loosen and fall out, or must be extracted to rid the system of the infecting Pycorrhoea germs.

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said, laying his plans, consulting her lawyers and getting a line on Harrowdale. The solicitors had farked it—had absolutely refused to help them. So he had had to make all the arrangements himself. Rather good fun!

He had had a man watching her husband and knew everything he did. Harrowdale would be in London until the following Sunday. This was Tuesday. There was an American vessel—a three-masted auxiliary schooner—lying in the Solent waiting to take her to America. Let her pack in valises what things she needed for herself and her children for the voyage and give out to the servants that she was tired of being left all alone by herself down in the country and that she was going up to town to stay for a while at a hotel. She must also pack and send up to London enough trunks to give verisimilitude to her statement. Everything was prepared, and a launch would be waiting in an inlet to take them to the schooner, which, once they were aboard, would weigh anchor and carry them back to her own country, where the laws were so much better adapted to accomplish justice.

Claudia was ecstatic at first. Then her smile faded. Bess was less than a year old! If it should be rough—the exposure in the launch! Nigel reassured her. Really there was nothing to fear. She ought, if possible, he said, to take a female servant to help her with the children. Had she a single maid out of the lot whom she could trust?

Claudia assured him that luckily there was one whose loyalty could not be questioned—old Spedding, the nurse who had been with Peter since his birth.

Good! Now to go on with the plan—Lady Harrowdale should take the afternoon train for London with her children, having bought through tickets in order to avert suspicion. At Basingstoke, however, they should all get out. He would be waiting for them there in the car and motor them back to the coast, to the hamlet near Christ Church where the launch would be waiting. By midnight they would be outside the three-mile limit and the Lord Chancellor could go hang!

He outlined the plan to her in a slightly whimsical way, as if the whole business was rather melodramatic and absurd even if—for some preposterous reason—necessary.

"Look here," he said, as he ordered the chauffeur to turn around. "The only thing we've got to be careful of is that no one in your employ, or in the village, has the least suspicion of what you're up to. We mustn't give 'em time to think it over. If you start tomorrow you'd better not pack your bags until after lunch. You can leave your maid behind to attend to the trunks and send them up to London. Funny, isn't it—to sit here and talk like this! Planning, as they say in the movies, a 'getaway.' I must say it's asking you to take me a good deal on faith!"

She touched his sleeve. "Oh no!" she said. "I know whom I can trust!"

Nigel raised her hand to his lips. For him the act was not merely impulsive, not merely chivalric, but a kind of sacrament. This girl was putting herself unreservedly in his hands—herself, her life, her children—a grave responsibility. Already he felt for her something more than mere sympathy. Fate, which had hitherto treated them both so malignantly, had thrust them

together in a strange way. Was fate perhaps trying to make amends?

"That villain butler of yours," he remarked as they neared the village, "Ventnor's his name, isn't it?—he writes to your husband every second day. But I don't worry much over him. The chap I'm afraid of is that fellow Hawker—who lives across the way from you. He's spent most of his time with Harrowdale whenever he's gone up to London. I've an idea they're hatching something!"

He was wholly unprepared for the result of this declaration upon his companion. She turned suddenly white and leaned her head against the side of the car.

"Oh!" she moaned. "Take me away from here! Take me away!"

For the first time Claudia realized the depth of her husband's infamy.

The car had stopped at the turn in the road above the grove of firs behind the Bandbox. The rain had ended and a reddish golden light was slanting through the tall ranks of spear-like boles.

"Well," said Nigel, "I suppose you had better get out here."

He opened the door and put one foot upon the running board, possessed by a curious excitement. The thing was becoming vivid. A real adventure! After all, she was taking a chance! He was asking a tremendous lot of her! And she looked so childlike, so frail.

"I suppose I must!" she sighed. "I hate to go back to that house!"

She held out her hand and took his with a firm pressure. Then, closing her eyes for a moment, she arose and he helped her down into the road.

"At Basingstoke, then—tomorrow night at seven. I'll be just across from the station," he said smiling.

"Very well! Good night!" she answered, her eyes holding his.

"Good night!" he replied, and as she turned away from him and started down the road he added under his breath—"you darling!"

Without reflecting on Sir Percy Harrowdale's intelligence it must be admitted that it had never once occurred to him that Claudia would take the bit in her teeth. What with her child-bearing and her loneliness she had seemed too cowed to do anything. Young Mr. Hawker, however, with some time hanging heavy on his hands, found pleasurable excitement in imagining all sorts of possibilities. That she could be faithful to her husband struck him as so wholly unlikely as to be ridiculous. If she wouldn't fall for him, why—there must be somebody else.

Strolling by the inn after he had seen her go out he learned that the dark, good looking chap who had lunched there had then gone over to the Bandbox, had afterwards paid his bill and had started off towards Denby.

"Aha!" thought Hawker. "That's the road my lady took." He decided that a little exercise would be a good thing for him.

He strolled off the road and sat down behind a rock among the firs, whence a half hour later he was an inconspicuous spectator of the little tableau at the door of the car. That evening he sent a wire to Harrowdale from the next town.

"Our ladybird has found a mate. Better stay away. I am on the watch and will report."

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When at three o'clock the following afternoon he met Ventnor as usual in the village, he found the butler much excited. Lady Harrowdale had unexpectedly decided to go up to London on the five o'clock taking the children with her. The trunks were to follow next day. He couldn't make it out—so sudden like. Hawker said nothing. He knew what was doing. She was going to London to be near the dark, good looking young man. He must keep track of her and see where she went. He had no particular objection to a day or so in London. On the whole he thought he might as well take the five o'clock himself.

"Why, hello!" he exclaimed in feigned astonishment as he ran into her with Peter and Bess on the up platform. "Goin' up to town? Is Harrowdale at the Berkeley? The fellow never tells me where he's stoppin'!"

For a moment she feared he would get into the compartment with them, but she carefully selected a "no smoking" one and to her relief, after promising to get a porter for her at Waterloo, he sought another.

Once on the train, with the children upon the seat beside her and her luggage in the rack, Claudia experienced her first anxieties. Then in the dusk she seemed to see Nigel standing there beside them, feel his lips upon her hand and his gray eyes fixed on hers. And she knew that she must go—not for the children's sake alone, but for her own.

"Basingstroke! Basingstroke!"

The guard threw open the door, letting in a blast of cold air. Terror clutched her throat but she signaled for a porter, and with Spedding bundled out the sleeping Peter and Bess. Next instant Nigel was beside her lifting Peter from her arms.

"This way. Everything is all right."

"I was so frightened," she gasped. "Mr. Hawker was on the train. I think he was following us."

Three minutes and they were off, roaring southward through the darkness.

It had begun to snow as they left Winchester and great flakes had lashed the windows, sagging down in crystal masses to the bottom of the panes, but by the time they had passed through Southampton it had changed to rain and they were running along narrow country byroads through a thick mist.

Then with a bump or two and a lurch, they stopped. Fearfully she looked out. A sailor in dripping oilskins stood by the roadside holding a lantern. It was pouring now.

"Here we are! Only a step from the gangplank!" laughed Nigel as he took up the inert form of little Peter. "We can dry off on board. The launch is only a few feet away."

Next instant she was beside the launch and the sailor was helping her in. The bottom of the boat ground over the silt, slid free and slipped into the current. Suddenly with a roar like a machine gun just behind her the engine started. A gust of spray leaped over the bow and fell upon them. Peter began to scream. She tried to still his cries but she was terrified also.

The launch was doing all sorts of queer things now, lifting itself high into the air and then gyrating downward again with a strange, sickening, scooping motion. Any instant they might upset. She could not

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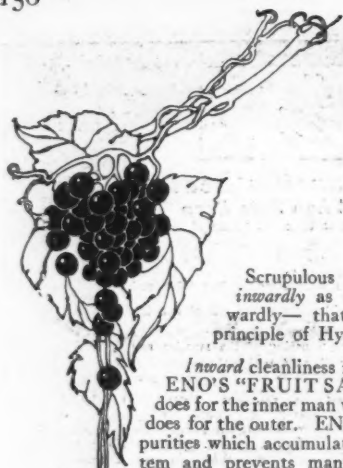
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maintain her balance. They were going
over! She screamed. Then she felt Nigel's
arm tight about her, holding her firmly to
him.

Again they rose into a staggering sea
that almost overturned them. They were
lifted high in the blackness—up—up—
toward a bright yellow gleam—a light-
house?—then sucked down, dropping away
from it to unfathomable depths.

The engine stopped. She saw waves
creaming in a black abyss and ropes
swinging. Nigel was holding up Peter
toward the ropes. He must not! She
could not let him risk Peter's life! They
struck something heavily. She was grasped
by rough hands and lifted toward the
light. She could never cling to the ropes—
never reach those lights!

The launch sank from beneath her,
leaving her clinging to something wet and
slimy. Hysterically she clung to it—
vowing never to leave it! More arms
seized her and she was dragged up and over
a hard thing that hurt her shins. Her legs
gave way and she sank upon a deck . . .

CHAPTER XVII

"LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG"

THE alchemy of what we call love defies
analysis. No matter how "thick and
slab" the gruel of passion there will be
at the bottom of the witches' cauldron
some tiny fleck of gold to reflect the flash
of an angel's wing.

It would be difficult to conceive a more
deliberate seeking of the merely carnal
than that of Rufus Kayne. It was no
more than that in his own mind and he
made no effort to deceive himself into
thinking that it was anything else. Yet
his instinct was not utterly sensual. He
was a lonely man and his nature yearned
for affection. Had he but known it, this
yearning for love was a tender flower of the
soul that might have been nurtured into a
thing of spiritual beauty.

He woke next morning rejuvenated and
with an exquisite sense of adventure.

The Avenue seemed brilliantly gay to
him. Everybody was smiling. "Laugh
and the world laughs with you!" He
cracked a joke at the directors' meeting
and, remembering that Elizabeth liked
violet, ordered a double bunch sent to
the house.

He ascertained Miss Delaval's number,
but checked an impulse to call her up and
ask how she was. However, feeling that
it would be only courteous, and certainly
good business, to acknowledge her exis-
tence, he stopped on his way out at the
public telephone adjoining the lunch
counter in the basement and ordered an-
other bunch of violets sent to her address.

During the succeeding weeks—whether
from excitement or from altruism—
Rufus became so changed as to be almost
unrecognizable. He lived in a state of
delicious perturbation. Mercedes's little
note thanking him for the violets had
raised him to ecstasy. It had contained no
salutation or signature, reading simply:

"How dear of you to send my favorite
flowers. They always make me so happy.
I hope you are happy too."

Three days later he sent more violets
and, after allowing plenty of time for them
to arrive, telephoned to her apartment.
She was out and he felt the world to be
empty.

Accordingly he was delighted when next morning he found an envelope addressed in her handwriting among the letters upon his desk—less so on discovery that Miss Dolan had slit the envelope along with the rest of the mail. There must be no more correspondence. All letters were dangerous. The telephone was the thing.

Thus there developed between them that most modern of relationships—a love affair by telephone, so stimulating to rapid intimacy. He often spoke of her as his "Voice on the Wire." Soon he was calling her up every morning on his way downtown, hungry to hear her drowsy tones answering from her bed, for she did not get up until noon. And then, of course, he had to call her again—she could not call him over the Trust Company's line—before he went out to lunch.

During this period Rufus saw a great deal of Mr. Savoy and went to several of his parties, at which Mercedes was invariably present. It gave him an excellent satisfaction to say to himself that this glorious young thing was his or might be if he but dropped his handkerchief.

Savoy and he took to lunching together frequently uptown and Rufus was astonished at the tremendous profits shown by the quarterly balance sheets of the moving picture producing companies. The selected producers, "directors" and managers to whom he was introduced seemed to be rolling in wealth. Quite inadvertently at his own solicitation he learned that Savoy thought well of the preferred stock of "Celebrated Celluloid"—a new concern—which paid eight percent and carried a heavy bonus of common, and quietly bought five thousand shares without disclosing the fact to his new friend.

Although he was in exuberant spirits, he did not altogether escape a feeling of cheapness. The fact that he, the president of the Utopia Trust Company, should have to go down to the basement to speak to Mercedes—drop a nickel in a slot in a fetid, overheated booth, smelling of wintergreen—put his passion to a severe test.

Nevertheless he could hear his heart thump as he waited expectantly for her sweet modulated voice, and the blood would rush to his face at the words:

"Oh, it's you! How dear of you to call me up! Yes, the violets were lovely. Yes, I'm happy. As much as I can be—" and he felt the unspoken words, "without you."

It was so easy to make love to her over the telephone! Yet it was rather unsatisfying.

Finally he evolved a clever plan, the very openness of which would disarm all suspicion. He and she would go independently to Washington Square and wait for the uptown buss. She should get in and climb to the top and, after she had taken her seat, he would go up and—without seeming to have done so intentionally—sit down beside her. Then having talked as much as they wished they could get off separately—without anyone being the wiser.

The plan worked perfectly, and Rufus experienced an exultant sense of proprietorship when Mercedes tripped coily past him to the stage. Above, in the blue twilight of the arc lamps, he squeezed the small gloved hand under her cape.

"How kind of you to come!" he whispered out of the corner of his mouth, pretending not to know her.

"I had to! You asked me, didn't you!" she sighed.

It was difficult to converse and yet not to converse—without being a ventriloquist—so he contented himself with holding her hand—kid-covered—for several miles. They repeated the adventure next day and then again, but while it was eminently safe Rufus felt that he was not getting much out of it and that it was even somewhat *infra dig*. So rather dashing—he thought—he took her first to a tea house in Greenwich Village and a week or so later to one of those quiet little English chop houses in the Forties.

"Coming—but slow!" was little Mercedes's comment to Mr. Savoy.

"I'll give a party to crank him up!" said he. "He's worth playing with."

"All the same I've only one life to live," she replied tartly. "If something doesn't happen pretty soon I shall cut the whole thing."

"Don't be an idiot!" cautioned her adviser. "Kayne's a big fellow. Give him time!"

To Rufus things seemed to be moving quite rapidly enough. He had fallen by this time desperately in love with her. In his wilder moments he even considered the possibility of getting a divorce from Elizabeth and doing the thing regularly. But he had never kissed her!

Then unexpectedly Mr. Savoy bade him to a friendly little Sunday night dinner at his apartment, at which among others appeared young Fannin of the Oriental Trust in the company of a blonde young woman with copperish hair. Rufus found himself once more beside Mercedes on the divan of Mr. Savoy's smoking den.

Sitting there together she was conscious that the atmosphere of the den was surcharged. Her moment was at hand. She could feel that he was trembling while he was puffing his Corona. She lowered her head and allowed her shoulders to droop towards the hands which she had folded in her lap, like the Henner picture of the Magdalen which she so much admired. Another instant and he would be crushing her to him.

She waited. Cautiously she glanced up at him. What was the matter with him? Conscience? or merely cold feet? That was no way for a man to look! Suddenly a suspicion turned her sick! Was it possible that she had overplayed her game? That he had really fallen in love with her?

She bit the inside of her mouth, wondering what to do. She cursed herself for having so bungled so simple a business. Her pretense of sweetness and innocence had been too successful and had roused his chivalry. What damnable foolishness! Was she going to lose it all?

Cold-blooded, mercenary little thing? Judge her not too severely! Harried by men; living by her smiles and by her wits; drifting from one boarding house or cheap apartment to another; getting her meals here and there; always in debt; subjected daily to insult; she suffered the embittered and jealous loneliness of the woman who faces the world by herself and knows that she can never be more than a plaything to the men who applaud and pet her.

In Rufus she saw not only a possible lover, but a powerful friend, through whom she might achieve at best the glittering world of society or even a possible

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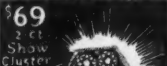


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marriage—at least, safety under his protection, a semi-respectability. He represented in her shoddy, vagrant existence, affection, tranquility of mind, financial security and stability.

Her intuition had told her the truth. Rufus, too, realized that the time had come. Things could not go on as they were. He had drunk a good deal at dinner and it had increased his natural sentimentality. She had become a cherished object—too sweet for him to defile. Poor little Mercedes! He must look out for her—protect her against himself—and perhaps herself.

"Look here, dear," he said suddenly, and his eyes glistered, "you've gone far enough with me!"

She lifted a face frightened to pallor.

"Do you mean it's all over?"

He nodded, swallowing.

"I thought you cared for me!"

"I do—God knows! That's why—"

Things were going all wrong. She moved her hand, palm upward, toward him—a gesture of sympathy and affection never failing of result. As he covered it with his she saw that his cheeks were wet.

"I had no business to get you into this!" he said. "I can't keep you and I can't bear to let you go! But it's my own fault."

"No! No!" she cried. "It's mine! Oh, Rufus!"

She wormed her slim, warm fingers into his and clung there. He pressed her wrist to his damp cheek.

"Darling!" he whispered for the first and only time.

Now or never.

He felt her arms around his neck, her body against his. No man could stand it. With a groan he clasped her to him and as she closed her eyes, kissed her fiercely.

"Nothing matters, sweetheart," she assured him, "so long as you love me! Nothing! Nothing in the world."

A footstep echoed in the hall outside and they broke apart. Rufus reached quickly for his cigar and was relighting it when Mr. Savoy appeared in the doorway.

"I just got an idea!" said the producer. "Tomorrow's Monday—an off night at the theater. How about a run down to Atlantic City? I can always get accommodations and if we started by half-past ten we'd get down there shortly after midnight. Half a dozen of 'em in there are quite keen for it! If you want to stay over you can wire the management from there to put in your understudy. He'll do it in a minute for you!"

Rufus looked slowly at Mercedes. The hand that held the match shook perceptibly.

"I'm game for it," he answered after a moment's hesitation, "if Miss Delaval is!"

He was relieved when the party dwindled to the Savoy's, another couple whom he had not known before, Mercedes and himself.

Savoy sent out for taxis, Mercedes went off to her apartment to pack, and Rufus telephoned to the Corner Store and engaged a landaulette. Then he returned home for the few things he would need over

the holiday. A half hour later they were off, the two other couples leading the way in the Savoy's pearl-gray touring car. Mercedes and himself following behind in the landaulette.

He told himself that everything would work out—somehow; but as they journeyed through the long hours he began to have greater doubts as to her innocence. By the time they had reached Atlantic City under the sticky light of a gibbous moon he no longer had any. When at last they drew up in front of the dimly lighted hotel he disentangled himself from her with a sense of abasement and lingered behind the group with averted face while they went to the desk to register. Only then did he realize to what an extent he was committed.

Thoroughly upset—frightened almost at what was in prospect—with a leaden arm and icy fingers he signed "R. Kayne, N. Y." at the end of the procession in a cramped, unnatural handwriting. Then, as Savoy busied himself with the bell-hop, he said to the clerk in an undertone:

"Put the others together. You can tuck me in anywhere."

Emotionally exhausted, fatigued by his long ride in the freezing wind, it was nearly noon before he awoke, in his room in the "Annex," after a heavy alcoholic sleep.

The sunlight was pouring through dirty uncurtained windows upon a warped floor of hard pine. His mouth was thick with carpet dust and a fine steel wire vibrated through his temples. He felt like a drummer after a spree. So this was the gay life!

He fumbled for his watch beneath the pillow—quarter past twelve. The others must have been up for hours—no, Mercedes never got up. Mercedes! He shuddered as he recalled their arrival of the night before. What was he, Rufus Kayne, doing at Atlantic City? It was horrible! How could he have imagined for an instant that Mercedes was anything but what he now knew her to be?

In a flash he saw the scandal that would overwhelm the entire family. It would kill Elizabeth! Smash his feeble old father—who took such pride in him! Besmirch Diana, Claudia, Sheila! They could never live it down.

He must get out of it somehow before it was too late.

Like that of a cornered rat, his eye darted round the shabby room. There was a telephone on the wall by the door and he unhooked it and asked the operator the hour of departure of the next train for New York. One-ten! The bus left at twelve-fifty-five. He could make it—if he hurried.

He gave the money for his bill to the chief bell-hop and descended in the elevator to the ground level where the porter handed him his reservation. He gave the man five dollars and instructed him to tell Miss Delaval that he had been unexpectedly obliged to return to the city and that he was placing his car at her disposal for the afternoon.

Half an hour later as the express scudded across the snow-covered fields he sat in the smoker feeling almost young. No one could catch him now!

The startling dénouement of Rufus's adventures in film finance will be told by Mr. Train in November COSMOPOLITAN.

Ma Callahan Capitulates

(Continued from page 64)

Miss Walbridge talked now and then. She said the usual things: that it seemed so unnecessary for a dear little child to suffer; that they had such marvelous vitality when it came to getting well. She talked of other children, of all sorts of cases she had known. And furtively she watched Mrs. Callahan.

The expected moment of mortal danger came. Miss Miller was again in the room; a strangely ticking clock said quarter to three. There was a gathering of forms about the bed; a sound from Marty that made Mrs. Callahan's heart stand still, a choking and sobbing, lights suddenly turned on, the interne back again. The child protested, strangling; Mrs. Callahan sank on her knees.

It was over, and Marty still breathed. The vigil recommenced.

And slowly, out of that night of horror and pain, something was born in the heart of the simple woman who sat there, waiting and fearing. To Mrs. Callahan the fact came slowly, but none the less with the power of a blinding revelation, that behind all this bureaucracy and tabulating and classifying—only she classed all this generally as "nonsense"—that she so hated, there was a tremendous force honestly and even nobly working, and that that force was for good.

Perhaps poisoned tonsils were dangerous, perhaps there might be smallpox epidemics if it were not for vaccination, perhaps—God forgive her!—a frail little fellow like Marty would be stronger on a simple diet of bread and milk.

And these girls, these nurses and inspectors and visitors, for whom she had always had so violent a contempt—what if they were really a sort of great army, unrequited, unrecognized, toiling away year after year under the great mass of ignorant and suffering humanity, fighting their pathetic battles for the world's less fortunate children?

And under all this shamed and troubled thought that was hardly formed into words ran the poignant agony of concern for Marty's life now, this moment. These unmarried girls, and that young doctor, were fighting hard for him; she herself could have fought no harder, even had she known—and she did not—one-tenth of what they knew! But it might be too late.

A look of rest and peace and resolution came into her handsome peasant face, and Miss Walbridge saw it there and somewhat understood it. And she understood now what made this magnificent bearer and rearer of sons and daughters different from nine-tenths of the women with whom the nurses and visitors of the Board of Health had to deal. Great love and great service had so mellowed and so disciplined this heart and brain that it might learn; and tonight—just in the last hours—prejudice and ignorance had been swept away, and the nurse knew that such a power as the new Mrs. Callahan would prove to be among the wives and mothers of her neighborhood would eclipse the influence of a thousand nurses, of a hundred Boards of Health. What she told Kate Oliver and Agnes Deane they would

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believe, and—if she believed it—she would spread the gospel of diet and hygiene in ways they could not fail to understand.

Josie and Jim crept up the wide, ammonia-sponged corridors at eight o'clock in a soft, snowy grayness of the next morning, and peeped into the sickroom. Their mother and Miss Miller creaked out into the hall, the door was shut, and upon the tired faces the radiant light of one more triumph shone like a glory. Miss Walbridge came up the long hall and joined them.

"He had the serum again at seven," said Mrs. Callahan, "and they think they see the effect—"

"Oh, decidedly!" Miss Miller supplied. "Does that mean that he's going to get well?" said Josie, trying to smile with suddenly brimming eyes.

"They—God bless them all—" her mother began, not too steadily: Miss Walbridge laughed brightly.

"Get well? Why, he'll be well in a week! There's no fever—the throat is clearing up. He's to have some warm milk after a while, and then you won't know him!"

Jim shook hands with her; Josie kissed Miss Miller, and there was shaky laughter.

"All is, we must take care of him for a long, long time!" Mrs. Callahan said warningly. "You'll write it down for me, won't you?" she asked Miss Walbridge. "When he's to have the warm milk, and just when he can begin on the rusks and baked custard and a little creamed spinach!"

Don't miss the next of the Ma Callahan stories by Kathleen Norris in November COSMOPOLITAN on sale at all news stands October 10.

Aunt Agatha Makes a Bloomer

(Continued from page 97)

Hemmingway." Even now she didn't get it.

"From Miss Hemmingway. Miss Hemmingway! But—but how did they come into her possession?"

"How?" I said. "Because she jolly well stole them. Pinched them! Swiped them! Because that's how she makes her living, dash it—palling up to unsuspecting people in hotels and sneaking their jewelry. I don't know what her alias is but her bally brother, the chap whose collar buttons at the back, is known in criminal circles as Soapy Sid."

She blinked.

"Miss Hemmingway a thief! I—I—" She stopped and looked feebly at me. "But how did you manage to recover the pearls, Bertie dear?"

"Never mind," I said crisply. "I have my methods." I dug out my entire stock of manly courage, breathed a short prayer and let her have it right in the thorax.

"I must say, Aunt Agatha, dash it all," I said severely, "I think you have been infernally careless. There's a printed notice in every bedroom in this place saying that there's a safe in the manager's office where jewelry and valuables ought to be placed and you absolutely disregarded it. And what's the result? The first thief who came along simply walked

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into your room and pinched your pearls.
And instead of admitting that it was all
your fault, you started biting this poor
man here in the gizzard. You have been
very, very unjust to this poor man."
"Yes, yes," chipped in the poor
man.

"And this unfortunate girl, what about
her? Where does she get off? You've
accused her of stealing the things on
absolutely no evidence. I think she
would be jolly well advised to bring an
action for—whatever it is and soak you
for substantial damages."

"Mais oui, mais oui, c'est trop fort!"
shouted the Bandit Chief, backing me up
like a good 'un. And the chambermaid
looked up inquiringly, as if the sun was
breaking through the clouds.

"I shall recompense her," said Aunt
Agatha feebly.

"If you take my tip you jolly well will,
and that eftsoons or right speedily. She's
got a cast-iron case, and if I were her I
wouldn't take a penny under twenty quid.
But what gives me the pip most is the way
you've unjustly abused this poor man here
and tried to give his hotel a bad name—"

"Yes, by damn! It's too bad!" cried the
whiskered marvel. "You careless old
woman! You give my hotel bad names,
would you or wasn't it? Tomorrow you
leave my hotel, by great Scotland!"

And more to the same effect, all good,
ripe stuff. And presently having said his
say he withdrew, taking the chambermaid
with him, the latter with a crisp tenner
clutched in a vise-like grip. I suppose
she and the bandit split it outside.

I turned to Aunt Agatha, whose de-
meanor was now rather like that of one
who, picking daisies on the railway, has
just caught the down express in the small
of the back.

"I don't want to rub it in, Aunt Agatha,"
I said coldly, "but I should just like to
point out before I go that the girl who stole
your pearls is the girl you've been hound-
ing me on to marry ever since I got here.
Good Heavens! Do you realize that if you
had brought the thing off I should prob-
ably have had children who would have
sneaked my watch while I was dandling
them on my knee? I'm not a complaining
sort of chap as a rule but I must say that
another time I do think you might be
more careful how you go about egging me
on to marry females."

I gave her one look, turned on my heel
and left the room.

"Ten o'clock, a clear night, and all's
well, Jeeves," I said, breezing back into
the good old suite.

"I am gratified to hear it, sir."

"If twenty quid would be any use to
you, Jeeves—"

"I am much obliged, sir."

There was a pause. And then—well,
it was a wrench, but I did it. I unstripped
the cummerbund and handed it over.

"Do you wish me to press this, sir?"

I gave the thing one last, longing look.
It had been very dear to me.

"No," I said, "take it away; give it to
the deserving poor—I shall never wear it
again."

"Thank you, sir," said Jeeves.

In the November COSMO-
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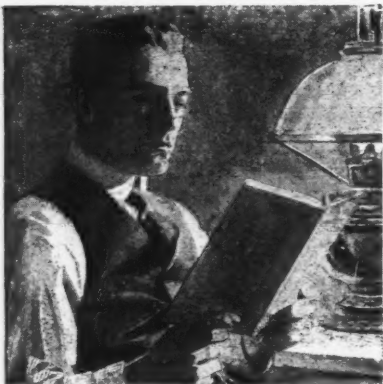
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Unfinished Stories

(Continued from page 86)

a Social Revolutionary who had been a provincial school teacher in her time. "Is the Cheka going to open a young ladies' institute?"

The newcomer, who stood gazing with a half frightened, half defiant expression at her eight companions, was a slip of a girl, not over fifteen, if that old. Her small, pointed face showed white above the tightly buttoned collar of her shabby green ulster; she was hatless and her restless gray eyes gleamed oddly from a mass of tangled dark brown hair. On her feet were a pair of straw slippers, known to the peasants as "lapiti" and she was stockingless. One small nervous hand clutched her throat. She had brought no baggage.

"What's your name, *dycotchka*?" asked Maria Alexeievna.

"Anna Ivanovna."

"Where do you come from?"

"From Svobodni Rossii—Free Russia."

"So-o, a little White Guardist," said Maria Alexeievna reflectively, for under the Denikin régime that was the name given to the "liberated" regions by his followers. "Don't you know that there is no Free Russia any more?"

"For me there will always be Free Russia," answered the child passionately. "I hate your Soviet Russia; and your Red Army—paugh! I come from Kafkaz, from Free Russia, I tell you. There in the mountains are men who still love Russia, working and fighting against your Soviets."

At this a gray haired woman started up from her pallet. "From the Caucasus?" she asked breathlessly. "Were you in—"

Here she was cut short by a warning glance from her neighbor. "Wait," she whispered, "we don't know anything about the child yet."

The woman who had asked the question was a Royalist whose son, a former Imperial officer, was hiding in the Caucasus. The girl who had warned her was a Communist, but in prison political differences are forgotten and there is a freemasonry among all prisoners. The bitterest political enemies unite against that ever present pest, the stool pigeon, known in Russia as the *nasyetka*. Newcomers are never trusted until they have given a straightforward account of themselves which can somehow be checked up.

No one could have been more innocuous in appearance, however, than the little prisoner, who stood uncertainly for a few minutes, then raised her hand to her head with a bewildered gesture.

"I—I feel rather faint," she said uncertainly.

At this, the atmosphere of suspicion changed to one of instant sympathy. "Take off your coat and lie down, child," said Maria Alexeievna kindly.

"No, no thank you. I'm a little cold," answered the girl, clutching her collar tighter than ever and shrinking from the kind hand that would have helped her to undress. She took a piece of white bread and a bit of salt herring from one of the women, curled up on the very edge of her bed and fell into a sleep of utter exhaustion.

In the morning she slept late and was roused only when it was time to go to the washroom. Once there she stood in a

corner watching the others as they stripped to the waist and splashed themselves with cold water in the big tin trough.

"Why don't you wash, Anna Ivanovna?" demanded one of the women. A sullen stare was the only answer. When they returned to the room she made no attempt to join in the general conversation. She lay on her bed with her eyes closed, but evidently not asleep. There was something curiously strained in her attitude.

"I'm going to talk to her and find out who and what she is," whispered Maria Alexeievna.

Then, sitting on the side of the bed, in spite of the girl's apparent reluctance, little by little she extracted her story.

Anna Ivanovna, according to her own account, was the daughter of a priest in one of the small towns on the western slopes of the Caucasus. More than a year previously she had been arrested with her mother and father, who were accused of having secret communications with the remnants of Denikin's forces in the mountains. After some months in prison they were tried, condemned to death and shot. Anna Ivanovna was held for some months longer and then sent to Moscow, to be committed, she said, to a reformatory for juvenile criminals. In the prison at Orel she had been forced to trade off everything she possessed in order to get enough bread to keep alive. Underneath her coat she wore nothing but a filthy torn chemise, she was covered with vermin and she was ashamed to undress. In Orel the other prisoners had laughed at her and beaten her, and the guards had only laughed too. In Free Russia she had been free indeed—and happy. In Soviet Russia she had found nothing but misery and suffering.

It was a plausible, convincing story and it was told with an appearance of utter sincerity that disarmed suspicion. Anna Ivanovna's warm hearted companions were completely won over. One woman contributed a piece of underwear, another a towel and a cake of soap, a third a comb, and so on, until each had given something to supply the deficiencies in her toilet. In the evening she was induced to take off her ulster and chemise in the washroom and to scrub herself from head to foot, after which she put on the clean undergarments.

At first she took these kind offices sullenly, rather suspiciously; then gradually she grew more friendly and less taciturn. Her mind was a strange mixture of sophistication and childishness. At times she told stories of vice and degradation among the women prisoners at Orel which made her listeners wince. Again she would retail the folk legends told by her grandmother in front of the stove on long winter evenings, and she never tired of listening to stories told by an American woman of Br'er Rabbit and Br'er Fox. She still had strange fits of silence, usually when there were whispered conversations going on, and occasionally she joined in political discussions with a rather uncanny knowledge of the subject. Whenever counter-revolutionary activities were mentioned she grew intensely bitter against the Soviet government, and she was particularly friendly with the Royalist.

While the other prisoners were still

rather cautious in talking before her, more from the fear that she might inadvertently repeat during a cross-examination stray remarks picked up in the room than for any other reason, no one, not even the wary Communist, felt any cause for suspecting her or her story; until one morning she refused to go to the wash-room on the day the prison commandant made his rounds, which he was in the habit of doing twice a week. The next time the commandant was due she did the same thing, and the women coming back rather earlier than usual caught him slipping out of their room. Then suspicion became a certainty, but it was decided to give no sign to Anna Ivanovna.

Meanwhile as the days went on it was evident that a change was coming over Anna Ivanovna. Always a nervous, irritable little thing, she became subject to curious moods and strange fits of depression. Finally one morning she got up rather earlier than usual and for at least half an hour paced restlessly up and down. At last she stopped short in the middle of the room and clasped her hands tightly behind her back.

"I can't stand it any longer. I've got to tell you something," she began. "It seemed easy at first because no one had ever treated me like a human being since I was arrested, but you have been so kind to me I can't go on."

"I lied to you—lied, lied, do you hear? I'm not going to be put in a reformatory. I'm going to have fine clothes, good food, plenty of money and go to the ballet school when I've earned it all by spying on you and others here in the Cheka. I'm a *nasyetka*—a spy—that's what I am. I was told that I was to stay in this room for two weeks and that I must listen to and report everything you said. They said you wouldn't suspect me because I'm nothing but a child. When I'm through here I must go to another room and tell the same story. It's all true except the part about my being half starved and beaten and having no baggage. I said that to get your sympathy. My clothes are in the commandant's office."

She paused for a moment and then went on wearily:

"I don't suppose I can ever make you understand. I am just a miserable coward. At first I felt it would be glorious to die for Free Russia. I laughed at them when they asked me to tell who came to our house from up in the mountains to talk to father and mother. When they were sentenced to death anyway without my testimony it all seemed different. I had no one to fight for any more. Everyone in the prison at Orel seemed to be out for himself. Nobody spoke a kind word to me, I was desperately lonely, and I was so young, I wanted so to live! Then they told me that I would be shot too unless I was willing to be a *nasyetka*."

"But I want to tell you that you can trust me—all of you in this room. You, you here"—her voice broke in a sob—"you've been too good to me."

Turning away abruptly, she flung herself on her bed and burst into a wild, uncontrollable fit of weeping.

For a few minutes there was silence; then the American walked over and sat down beside the pathetic little figure and placed a hand on the heaving shoulders.

"Anna Ivanovna," she said softly,



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"Anna Ivanovna, we've all known what you just told us for some time, but it hasn't made the least bit of difference. Plenty of older and far wiser people than you have done just what you did under the same circumstances."

"Then you don't hate me? You'll treat me the way you've always done?"

"Of course."

After that Anna Ivanovna was like a different person. She was quiet, gentle, even affectionate; the last trace of the furtive, watchful attitude entirely disappeared. It was useless to try to exact a promise from her to give up her rôle of *nasyetka*, but Maria Alexeievna and the others tried to convince her that children under sixteen were never shot in Moscow for any crime whatsoever, and that the worst she had to look forward to in case she refused was a term in the reformatory. She seemed to believe them, though it was hard to tell what was going on inside her troubled little brain. As the time drew near for her to be transferred she talked very little and sat a great deal apart, evidently fighting a battle with herself.

"I'll probably be moved today," she announced one morning. Then deliberately gathering up the few necessary undergarments and other articles that had been given her by her roommates, she tied them up in a handkerchief, put on the torn chemise and her old green coat and sat down on her bed to wait for the prison guard. They watched her in silence. If she took the bundle when she left she would probably start on the level with her new companions. If she left it she would probably try the old hard luck story again.

Finally a step was heard outside, the door was unlocked and a guard appeared. "Pack your clothes!" he ordered sharply, looking at Anna Ivanovna. She got up slowly, put out a hand to take the bundle, then drew it back again and stuck it in her pocket. With the other hand she grasped her collar with the old familiar gesture and turned to the others with a wan smile that was sadder than tears.

"Good by," she said. "I guess I'm still a coward after all"; and she was gone.

The Death Warrant

THE table had been pushed against the wall and several of the plank beds stood up on end to provide floor space for the dancing. Mlle. Tasya, late of the Imperial Ballet at Petrograd, was going to give an exhibition. As she stood poised in the middle of the room, barefoot, draped in a peasant shawl that revealed every line of her supple figure, slender as a young birch tree, her chestnut hair forming an aureole around her face, the grim gray walls of the prison room vanished as if by magic . . .

Stretching before us as far as the eye could reach were the illimitable spaces of the Kirghiz steppe. The desert air was sharp and cold, and in the distance sounded the beating of a drum and the tinkle of a camel's bell. A chieftain in an astrakhan kaftan sat cross-legged on a Persian rug before the door of his striped tent, his followers grouped about him. Opposite him were his women. One of them rose slowly, prostrated herself before him. The others started a low rhythmic chant to the accompaniment of a queer strangled in-

strument, growing faster and louder and finally rising to shrill ecstasy as she moved, first languidly, then more and more rapidly, until she reached the whirlwind climax of the wild Tartar dance and sank exhausted at the great Khan's feet . . .

The two women who had been humming the ballet music from Prince Igor stopped for breath, the desert scene faded away, the atmosphere of the stifling room seemed unbearably close, the beauty and color were gone. Tasya rose slowly from the dirty floor. The lovely oval of her face was flushed with color, her gray eyes luminous, her mobile lips parted in a smile. "I haven't forgotten," she said triumphantly.

"Brava Tasya!" we shouted.

Evfimie Andreevna surreptitiously wiped her eyes. "*Gospodi*," she murmured, "*molodyetz*—youth! She has forgotten—the other." For Tasya a few weeks earlier had been condemned to death.

She had mentioned the fact to us soon after her arrival, but casually, and she never alluded to it again. For the most part she was serenely cheerful, talking of art and literature, arguing skilfully in support of Marxian doctrines, for she was an enthusiastic Communist. Her attitude towards the party did not seem to have been changed by the fact that she had been sentenced to death.

As she sat down after the dance was over it was evident that she was living for the moment in a world of memories.

"The last time I did that dance," she said, "a grand duke offered me a string of emeralds to do it again for him. It was at the Marinsky opera in Petrograd."

"I laughed at him, threw on my coat and went out to walk on the Nevski Prospekt with Feodor Chaliapin. We strolled along the embankment until long after midnight and the street was quite deserted. It was one of our glorious white June nights. A nightingale was singing somewhere in the distance. 'I can beat that,' said Feodor, and he sang '*Ya vas Lyoubil—I Loved You Once*'; it was only a sentimental popular romance but it seemed to me that I had never heard anything more beautiful. He meant it as joke, but he made it a poem. And then I was only seventeen. I had just turned down a grand duke and the greatest artist in Russia was singing for me alone."

"And yet all that did not satisfy you, Tasya," I said, for I knew that a few months later she had been arrested for membership in the Communist party.

"No," she said slowly, "I was always looking for something I could not find, something worth living and dying for. Nothing I had seemed worth while after I got it; and then," she continued, "rebellion against the existing order of things was in my blood. My grandfather was the son of a rich *pomestchik*, a great landlord in the Ukraine. When he was nineteen he fell in love with a Jewess and so his father turned him out."

"He and his young wife starved together until he had graduated as a physician at the University of Kharkov, and he died of overwork. She only lived a few months after his death and left a little boy, my father, who, when he was grown, took up medicine as his father had done."

"While a student at the University of Kharkov he met a *gymnasistka*, a girl

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student at the Kharkov gymnasium, and married her. My mother was a very brilliant woman, but she was never meant to be a mother. We children seldom saw her. She was connected with the Nihilist movement. If it had not been for our *nyanya*, our old family nurse, who took care of us during *matushka's* long absences, I don't know what would have become of us.

"Then came the Russo-Japanese war. My father was sent to Siberia as an army physician, and for many months we heard nothing from him. Finally a telegram came saying that he was on his way back to Kharkov. We went down to the station to meet him, my mother and I. It was a hospital train filled with wounded, but there was one car containing typhus patients. It had been closed and sealed at Vladivostok to prevent the spread of infection on the way through Siberia.

"My father and thirty men were in that car. When they opened it twenty-eight of them were dead, my father and the other two were dying. I shall never forget *matushka's* face when they told her, though I was only five years old.

"After that mother was rarely at home. One day a man came and told our *nyanya* something that made her cry a great deal. She finally told us *matushka* had been taken to Siberia, and a few months later were notified that she had died in the penal settlement at Nerchinsk.

"Meanwhile our old *nyanya* was growing very feeble, and my great-grandmother decided that she would have to take us to live with her.

"We went to her *imenya*, her country estate, where Elena, my younger sister, a sweet, gentle little thing, became the pet of the family. I was always in trouble.

"My grandmother hated me. When I was twelve years old she consented with alacrity to the proposal of our dancing master, who said that he could get me enrolled in the Imperial Ballet School at Petrograd. I was very old for my age, and I soon made friends with the gymnasts and the students in the university, many of whom were revolutionary.

"When I made my debut in Petrograd I was already a Socialist. Practically I think Communism is a failure but a glorious one. Put to the test we are all individualists even within the party and we are doomed to defeat our own ends, but we have at least had the vision."

For a while we sat in silence. Suddenly Tasya leaned forward, elbows on the table, her chin in her cupped hands.

"Margarita Bernardovna," she began, "I suppose you have often wondered why I was arrested and condemned to death, and why I take it all so calmly. I was sentenced for a crime I never committed. While I was living in Kharkov I had a visit one day from a former army officer whom I had met in Petrograd before the Revolution. He knew that I was a Communist—I knew he belonged to the old régime—so we both avoided politics. He went away and I never saw him again, but many months later a counter-revolutionary plot was discovered in Kharkov. Among the seized documents was a list of persons who might be counted on to help the counter-revolutionaries. My name was included and I could not explain how it had come there.

"I was tried and condemned for treason



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to the party. The Central Executive Committee in Moscow had granted a stay of execution in the hope that the man who put my name on the list will be found and forced to confess. I don't believe they will find him. If I were a Christian I should probably say it was retributive justice."

"What do you mean?" I asked wonderingly. Tasya went on.

"When I was released from prison in 1917 I threw myself heart and soul into party work. When the campaign against Petlura began I was given one of the most important positions open to party members—political commissar in the Red Army."

"I went to the front with my regiment. My work was no easy task. I had charge of all propaganda among the soldiers, I was responsible for the discipline and morale of the troops, I had to settle all disputes between the army and the civilian population, and I reviewed the cases and signed the death warrants of all offenders tried before the military tribunals."

"At that time we were fighting two enemies. On the front we were pressed by Petlura's men, in the rear we were subject to constant attacks from semi-political bandits."

"One of them, a White Guardist, had given us no end of trouble. When we thought we had him cornered he always escaped as if by a miracle, reappearing and reorganizing his scattered band in some other part of our territory. At last he was captured and sentenced to death. I signed the death warrant."

"I was not present at the trial, but I heard from a number of witnesses that his bearing had been quite extraordinary throughout. He was cool, alert, collected, and he scorned to justify his conduct or say anything in his defense. He seemed, they said, to be a man of superior education. As a rule, unless there was some particular reason, I never questioned the prisoners, but I felt an overwhelming curiosity to see what this man was like, so I sent for him the night before the day set for his execution."

"When the guard brought him in I was telephoning at my desk. I glanced up hastily and our eyes met. He was physically the most perfect being I had ever seen, and the first thought that flashed through my mind was that it was a pity to have to destroy anything so beautiful. As I hung up the receiver I motioned him to sit down. At the same time I told the guard to leave us—I would not need him for an hour. Then I turned again to my prisoner. He was sitting in an armchair smoking a cigarette, regarding me oddly through his half closed eyes. It seemed to me that I saw pity, contempt and an unwilling admiration in that veiled glance. It was as if conditions were reversed, and he were the judge—not I."

"He spoke first. 'Well, what do you want with me, Citizeness Commissar?'"

"I tried to speak sternly, but I was irritated to find that my voice trembled, and try as I might I could not meet those eyes. 'I wish to know if you have any final statement to make,' I said. 'You refused to speak at the trial.'"

"Yes," he answered coolly. "I would like to tell you that I have done everything of which I was accused and more. I would do it all over again if I had the chance. I believe in all the old bourgeois standards you have swept away, and for all your boasted altruism you have only created a new despotism to take the place of the old. The Russian people know it in their hearts, but you have made them inarticulate by means of your Red Terror."

"I looked at him in amazement. 'You dare to say this to me!' I said."

"Why not?" he answered. "You will have me shot anyway tomorrow."

"The bald statement of fact cut like a knife. I looked at him again. I had signed the death warrant of this man. He was at my mercy, and yet somehow I felt that he was master of the situation. In his curiously intent gaze contempt had given way as we talked to something else, something that made me catch my breath."

"Suddenly an irresistible temptation came to me. I got up, hardly realizing what I was doing, and my own voice sounded strangely to me as I spoke."

"I am going to my room to get some cigarettes," I said. "I will be gone fifteen minutes, and I have dismissed the guard. It—it is dark outside. The sentinel will not see you if you climb out the window and go through the garden."

"In my room I sat on the bed and watched the clock, praying that he would get away safely. He would have fifteen minutes' start before I gave the alarm."

"When the time was up and I opened the door he was sitting calmly just where I had left him. 'Why didn't you go?' I gasped."

"He rose from his chair and took my hands in his. 'Look at me!' he commanded. 'I obeyed.'"

"I think you are the most wonderful woman I have ever seen," he said slowly. "God made you to be loved, not hated. You are throwing away your divine birthright. It is monstrous that you should be sending men to their deaths without a quiver of compunction, but you will never do it again. I watched you closely while we talked awhile ago. You are still a woman in spite of your hideous creed. There is no use of your denying it—you love me, and I knew from the first moment I saw you that you were the woman I had dreamed of all my life."

"If I had escaped tonight it would only have meant postponing the inevitable. Sooner or later I would be captured again and shot. Mine is a dangerous trade. Meanwhile perhaps you would forget me. If I die tomorrow you will never forget me and you will never condemn another man to death." He stooped and kissed me full on the mouth."

"For a moment that seemed like an eternity my lips clung to his. Then I wrenched myself loose and groped my way blindly to the telephone."

"One minute," he said sternly. "You will be there tomorrow at dawn when I am shot. Promise me."

"I nodded assent."

"Now call the guard."

"When the man came he turned and went out without a word."

"That night I never closed my eyes. I tried to think clearly, to realize what I had done, but I could remember nothing except the look in his eyes, the touch of his hands and the pressure of his lips on mine."

"The sun was rising as I came into the village square where a platoon of soldiers was drawn up. It scintillated on their fixed bayonets and on the gold cross above the village church. A baby cried fretfully in a house facing the square, a mongrel dog followed me and sniffed curiously at my heels. I noticed all these details carefully, forcing myself to concentrate my attention on trivial things so that I would seem composed before my men."

"In a few minutes the prisoner was brought out. He was apparently quite unconcerned and was calmly smoking a cigarette. When he saw me standing there a faint smile curved his lips."

"Remember," he said in an undertone, "you will never sign another death warrant."

"Then he turned to the corporal of the guard who stood ready with a handkerchief."

"You needn't bind my eyes," he said.

"I want to face the sun."

"The corporal looked at me. I nodded consent."

"He carefully flicked the ashes from his cigarette and faced the firing squad."

"Ready," he said.

"I saw nothing more and even the sharp crack of the rifles sounded muffled in my ears. I don't quite know how I got back to my billet."

"After that I continued my work as political commissar for just one week. Then I resigned on the plea of ill health and went back to Kharkov. It was no use—I could never condemn another man to death."

"I had committed a crime against the party, and my faith in myself was gone. I despised myself, and yet I would have done it all over again for another kiss from a bandit, an enemy of the cause of the proletariat. Now you know what I meant by speaking of retributive justice."

Tasya was as merciless to herself as she had been to others; but there was an unspoken question in my mind to which I felt I must have an answer."

"Tasya," I said, "if he had got away, if he had lived, would you have felt the same way about it?"

It seemed unnatural that she should, for a principle, voluntarily relinquish her grasp on life. There was something else behind it."

"No," she answered, "and that is the real reason why I hate myself."

A few days later she was taken away. I never knew what became of her. The thought of her facing a firing squad was intolerable; and yet I wondered if, after all, I had a right to hope that she would live to face the tragedies of her lost faith and her memories."

Marguerite Harrison's astonishing silhouettes from a Russian prison will be concluded in November COSMOPOLITAN.



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* * *

YET, great as the du Pont Company's services to the country have been in times of war, those are only the occasional services, for, happily, war comes but rarely. And it is the unsung services of the du Pont organization in times of peace that are truly remarkable.

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Since its earliest beginnings, the du Pont Company has been building upon the foundations of chemistry. Not only was

E. I. du Pont de Nemours himself a chemist, who had studied with the celebrated Lavoisier in Paris, but the manufacture of explosives was then and is now one of the industries that most require the services of the chemist.

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And the du Pont Company's assistance in developing the Chemical Engineer and introducing him into his rightful place in American industry is not the least of the du Pont Company's services to the country.

* * *

BUT yet another service has come through the Chemical Engineer—the family of du Pont products that carry the du Pont Oval. There is Fabrikoid for upholstery, luggage and bindings of books, not to mention half a hundred other uses—there is Pyralin from which toilet-ware for your wife's dressing table is made and many other articles—there are paints, varnishes, enamels, lacquers—there are dyes—there are many chemicals that America's industries must have—seemingly non-related, yet all of them the legitimate children of a manufacturer of explosives, for the basic materials or processes that go to the making of each of them are similar to those that du Pont Chemical Engineers use in the making of explosives—and it is only through the manufacture of such products as Fabrikoid and Pyralin and dyestuffs in times of peace that the du Pont Company can be sure of being prepared for its larger service—that of insuring means for the nation's defense in times of war.

This is one of a series of advertisements published that the public may have a clearer understanding of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. and its products.

E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS & COMPANY, Inc., Wilmington, Del.

TRADE DU PONT MARK

Lorain Layer Cake



One easy turn of the Lorain Red Wheel gives the housewife a choice of 44 measured and controlled oven heats for any kind of oven cooking or baking.

To bake cake without ever a failure

CAKE—Chocolate Cake, Spice Cake, Angel Food, Jelly Roll, Molasses Cake, Sponge Cake,—surely this favorite dessert is welcome at any table, any time. And, when it comes to making Cake, truly "There is no place like home". Fresh eggs, pure creamery butter, thick spreading of filling and frosting—everything you want and just as you want it. And yet—

Why do the cakes in the bake-shop windows always look so much more appetizing than your own? And why do so many housewives prefer to serve store-cake rather than make their own of purest ingredients?

With the aid of a cook book every housewife can mix the ingredients of a cake perfectly. Why then should she hesitate to bake all her own cakes?

You know the answer. It's just this. Even the best home-cooks feel they are "taking a chance" when entrusting the carefully-mixed ingredients to an uncertain oven. Then there's the peering, inserting of broom straws, and what not—poor and provoking methods at best to tell when the cake is "done".

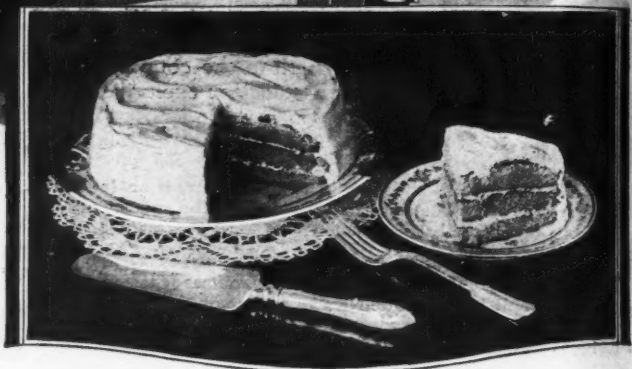
The fear of another baking-failure is natural. It's born of many failures, many more "just middling" successes, with here and there a crowning achievement that tempts one to try again and again to duplicate that one "lucky" success.

To banish these baking-worries forever thousands upon thousands of housewives have discarded their old cooking stoves

and have bought new Lorain-equipped Gas Ranges that bake any kind of cake perfectly—every time.

Furthermore, the Lorain Oven Heat Regulator makes it possible to can fruits and vegetables in the oven or to bake, roast and boil any food in the oven without ever a failure, because Lorain not only measures the heat of the gas oven just as scales weigh ingredients but controls the heat as well. Think what this means in gas-saving, labor-saving, time-saving, food-saving, worry-saving!

The Lorain Oven Heat Regulator is endorsed by leading cookery experts. Lorain-



Recipe—CAKE

4 eggs
2 cup powdered sugar
2 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. grated lemon rind
1/2 cup bread flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt

Beat yolks of eggs thoroughly, add sugar gradually, beating well after each addition. Add lemon juice and rind and beat again. Mix flour, baking powder and salt, and sift to-

gether twice. Sift into egg mixture and beat three minutes. Fold in egg whites which have been beaten until stiff.

Bake 30 Min. at 325°
Makes 3 layers, 7 inches in diameter. Serves 12

Recipe—ICING

2 cups sugar
1/2 cup boiling water
2 egg whites
1/2 tsp. vanilla
pink coloring

Dissolve sugar in boiling water, boil until the candy thermometer registers 238 degrees, or until a soft ball is formed when the syrup is tried in cold water. Pour very slowly onto egg whites which have been beaten until stiff. Add vanilla and coloring to make a very pale pink. Beat until stiff enough to hold shape. Spread between layers and on top of cake.

Makes filling and frosting sufficient for a 3 layer cake 8 inches in diameter

These recipes especially prepared for American Stove Company by Modern Priscilla Proving Plant

equipped Gas Ranges are used by America's finest schools and universities in the teaching of domestic science. In fact, Lorain has revolutionized cookery, changing it from an inaccurate art to a very accurate science. That's why you'll find the exact "time and temperature" for cooking and baking now included in all good, modern recipes.

Wherever gas is used you'll find dealers who'll be glad to demonstrate a Lorain-equipped Gas Range to you. You'll recognize these wonderful stoves at a glance by the brilliant red wheel. Mail us the coupon and we'll send you an interesting booklet.

Only these famous Gas Stoves are equipped with the "Lorain"

CLARK JEWEL—George M. Clark & Co. Div., Chicago, Ill.

DANGLER—Dangler Stove Company Div., Cleveland, Ohio

DIRECT ACTION—National Stove Company Div., Lorain, Ohio

NEW PROCESS—New Process Stove Company Div., Cleveland, Ohio

QUICK MEAL—Quick Meal Stove Company Div., St. Louis, Mo.

RELIABLE—Reliable Stove Company Div., Cleveland, Ohio

AMERICAN STOVE COMPANY

1710 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Largest makers of gas ranges in the world

We manufacture coal stoves and the celebrated Lorain Oil Burner Cook Stoves for use where gas is not available, but the "Lorain Regulator" cannot be used on these

LORAIN

OVEN HEAT REGULATOR

AMERICAN STOVE COMPANY
1710 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Please send me free copy of your latest booklet.

Name _____

Address _____

City & State _____

Check your favorite stove:

Clark Jewel New Process Dangler
Quick Meal Direct Action Reliable

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Pompeian Day Cream



"Don't Envy Beauty - Use Pompeian"

The shaded lights cannot conceal her wondrous beauty. Her vivid smile, her flashing eyes, are accentuated by the soft, beautiful coloring of her cheeks. She wins the admiration of all who see her. And why shouldn't she? She knows and uses the complete "Pompeian Beauty Toilette."

First, a touch of Pompeian DAY Cream (vanishing). It softens the skin and holds the powder. Then apply Pompeian BEAUTY Powder. It makes the skin beautifully fair and adds the charm of fragrance. Now a touch of Pompeian BLOOM for youthful color. Do you know that a bit of color in the cheeks makes the eyes sparkle with a new beauty? Presto! The face is beautified and youth-i-fied in an instant! (Above three articles may be used separately or together. At all druggists, 60c each.) Be sure to get Pompeian.

TRY NEW POWDER SHADES. The correct shade is more important than color of your dress. New NATURELLE is a more delicate tone than Flesh, blends with medium complexion. New RACHEL is a rich cream tone for brunettes.

"Don't Envy Beauty—Use Pompeian"

Day Cream (60c) . . . holds the powder
Beauty Powder (60c) . . . in four shades
Bloom (60c) . . . a rouge that won't break
Massage Cream (60c) . . . clears the skin
Night Cream (50c) improved cold cream
Fragrance (30c) . . . talc, exquisite odor
Vanity Case (\$1.00) . powder and rouge
Lip Stick (25c) . . . makes lips beautiful



GUARANTEE

The name Pompeian on any package is your guarantee of quality and safety. Should you not be completely satisfied, the purchase price will be gladly refunded by The Pompeian Co., at Cleveland, Ohio.

TEAR OFF NOW

To mail or to put in purse as shopping-reminder

POMPEIAN CO., 2036 Payne Ave., Cleveland, O.
Gentlemen: I enclose 10c (a dime preferred) for 1922 Art Panel. Also please send five samples named in offer.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____

Naturelle shade powder sent unless you write another below

Get 1922 Panel—Five Samples Sent With It

"Honeymooning in Venice." What romance! The golden moonlit balcony! The blue lagoon! The swift-gliding gondolas! The serenading gondoliers! Tinkling mandolins! The sighing winds of evening! Ah, the memories of a thousand Venetian years! Such is the story revealed in the new 1922 Pompeian panel. Size, 28 x 7 1/4 inches. In beautiful colors. Sent for only 10c. This is the most beautiful and expensive panel we have ever offered. Art store value 50c to \$1. Money gladly refunded if not wholly satisfactory. Samples of Pompeian BEAUTY Powder, DAY Cream (vanishing), BLOOM, NIGHT Cream (an improved cold cream), and Pompeian FRAGRANCE (a talc), sent with the Art Panel. With these samples you can make many interesting beauty experiments. Please tear off coupon now and enclose a dime.

THE POMPEIAN CO., 2036 Payne Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio
Also Made in Canada

© 1922, The Pompeian Co.





Postum is the greatest home drink in the world—it brings everybody together. The children as well as their elders can enjoy it without fear of harmful effects. Its delicious roasted wheat flavor appeals to a variety of exacting tastes. No matter what other drinks you like, you will enjoy Postum, too.

Postum is the perfect hot drink for the children's supper—friendly to young stomachs and absolutely safe for young nerves.

Grown-ups, also, will find it the ideal evening beverage, and the later the hour the more they will appreciate its soothing warmth and genial savor—an ideal invitation to restful sleep.

Postum for Satisfaction and Health

"There's a Reason"

Made by Postum Cereal Co., Inc., Battle Creek, Mich.

"The Home of Happy Breakfasts"

Sold by good grocers everywhere!

INSTANT POSTUM IS MADE

in the cup by merely pouring boiling water on a level teaspoonful of the rich, deep brown Postum granules. Then add cream and sugar.



Postum comes in two forms:—Instant Postum in tins, and Postum Cereal in packages. Postum Cereal is prepared by boiling fully 20 minutes.

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